San Marcos Today

Chapter 2

SAN MARCOS TODAY
INTRODUCTION

In order to develop a plan for the growth and development of the community, it is important to understand the existing conditions that have shaped the community. This section will describe:

The History of San Marcos

San Marcos is perhaps the oldest continually occupied site in North America. Understanding how and why San Marcos has grown over time is significant in determining how it will grow in the future

Regional Setting

A city grows or declines along with the surrounding region. Understanding where San Marcos is located and what cities are in the surrounding region will help determine the rate of its growth.

The Natural Environment

San Marcos has many unique physical and environmental features that contribute to the high quality of life in the community. The preservation of the natural environment, with its impact on physical development, is an important force shaping the growth of the city.

The Built Environment

New development often follows current development patterns. The location and capacity of streets, the infrastructure, and available land determine the direction and intensity of new growth.

The People of San Marcos

San Marcos is a diverse community. Demographic characteristics such as age, income, ethnicity, and household size influence the rate and intensity of new growth. These characteristics also give rise to particular needs within the community.

The Economy of San Marcos

The strength of the local economy depends on a variety of internal and external forces. The economy is a major force influencing the rate and quality of growth in the city.

Community Facilities

The location and amount of existing community facilities in a city determines the location and rate of future development patterns and the ability of the city to service the needs of its citizens.

SAN MARCOS TODAY
HIGHLIGHTS

The Natural Environment

- The Balcones Escarpment, which runs through the center of San Marcos, splits the city into two contrastingly beautiful regions -- the scenic canyon-traversed Texas Hill Country to the west and the rich, gently rolling farmlands to the east.
- Land elevations in the San Marcos area reach heights over 1,000 feet above sea level.
- The centerpiece of San Marcos is the spring-fed San Marcos River that meanders through the city between park-lined banks.
- San Marcos has a mild climate with approximately 230 days of sunshine annually.
- San Marcos has an annual median temperature of 68°F with an annual average rainfall of 33 inches.
- Several species of aquatic vegetation and animals in the San Marcos River are included on the Federal Endangered Species List.

The Built Environment

- The City of San Marcos encompasses 17.6 square miles and its land area is 60% developed.
- San Marcos has over 15,000 residential units, 68% multifamily, 27% single family, and 5% mobile homes.
- The majority of the primary thoroughfares and traffic signals in San Marcos were built as part of the state highway system and are owned and maintained by the state.
- The San Marcos Central Business District (CBD), developed during the late 1800's, is the largest, most intensely developed mixed-use area in the city. The focal point of

the CBD is the traditional courthouse square, designated on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Southwest Texas State University is the state's seventh largest university with approximately 21,000 students. The campus is built atop hills overlooking San Marcos and dominates the city's skyline.

The People of San Marcos

- Currently, 37,011 people live in San Marcos.
- Southwest Texas State University has approximately 21,000 students. Fifty-one percent of these students live in San Marcos while the remaining commute to school from outside the city.
- The people of San Marcos are ethnically diverse. The population is 57% White, 37% Hispanic, 5% Black, and 1% other.
- The people of San Marcos are predominantly young. The median age in San Marcos is 23 years old.
- The people of San Marcos have a median family income of $23,757.
- Forty-six percent of the people of San Marcos live in family units. The remaining 54% live alone or with roommates.
- Average household size in San Marcos is 2.4 persons per household.
- Two-thirds of the people of San Marcos over 18 years have at least some college education.

The Economy of San Marcos

- San Marcos enjoys a strong and stable economy built around education and government. The city's economy is diversifying and gaining strength in the tourism, retail, manufacturing, and health services sectors.

- Over 17,000 people are employed in San Marcos. The largest public sector employers in San Marcos are Southwest Texas State University, the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District, Hays County, the City of San Marcos, and Aquarena Springs Resort.
- The largest private sector employers are the San Marcos Factory Shops, Tanger Factory Outlet Center, Central Texas Medical Center, Marshall Gas Controls, and H.E.B. Food Stores.
- The development of two factory outlet retail centers in San Marcos has had a strong impact on the tourism industry in San Marcos. The San Marcos Factory Shops and the Tanger Factory Outlet Center have a combined total of over 150 outlet stores covering over 600,000 square feet. The centers annually attract more than 3.7 million shoppers and employ more than 1,350 persons.
- The outlet malls, Aquarena Springs, Wonder World, historic districts, and outdoor water recreation are the city's main tourist attractions.

Community Facilities

- The City of San Marcos owns various facilities including the City Hall complex; police headquarters; three fire stations; a public library; the San Marcos Municipal Airport; a wastewater treatment plant; the Women, Infants and Children program building; a water treatment plant; and the San Marcos Electric Utility.
- The San Marcos Municipal Airport is classified as a reliever airport and its land area covers over 1,300 acres.
- The City of San Marcos owns and maintains 20 parks throughout the city.
- San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District serves over 6,500 students in pre kindergarten to 12th grade on nine campuses.
- The Central Texas Medical Center is a 109-bed acute-care hospital housing more than 30 medical services departments serving San Marcos and the surrounding areas.

SAN MARCOS TODAY
FACTS AT A GLANCE

Form of Government	Council/Manager
Land Area	17.3 Square Miles
City Population (as of January 1, 1995)	37,011
City Assessed Property Value (1994-95)	$755,680,689
Total City Budget	$49,877,345
City Tax Rate (1994-95)	$0.46
Operating & Maintenance	$0.16
Debt Service	$0.30
City Sales Tax	1.5%
Bond Ratings	
Moody's	A
Standard & Poors	A
Fire Department (Full-time Personnel)	32
Police Department (Commissioned Officers)	65
Total City Employees (as of October 1, 1994)	408
Park Sites	20
Park Acreage	160.8
Miles of City Streets	125
Miles of Water Lines	140
Miles of Wastewater Lines	140
Public Library Volumes (1994)	86,518
Library Circulation (1994)	376,472
Value of Building Permits (1994)	$28,114,145
Hays County Unemployment Rate (1994)	3.5%
Hays County Per Capita Income (1990)	$11,500
Hays County Median Age (1990)	26.6 Years
City Water Connections (as of December 31, 1994)	6,008
Electrical Customers (as of December 31, 1994)	13,263
Rainfall in San Marcos (1994)	40.9 inches
Median Daily Temperature	68°F
Educational Enrollments	
San Marcos C.I.S.D. (1994)	6,505
San Marcos Baptist Academy (1994)	340
Southwest Texas State University (1994)	20,932
Gary Job Corps Center (1994)	2,025

THE HISTORY OF SAN MARCOS

Prehistory

Archaeological evidence indicates that people have inhabited the area around San Marcos Springs for over 12,000 years. Fertile soils, a constant water supply, and abundant game provided the setting for possibly the oldest continually occupied site in North America. Artifacts discovered at San Marcos Springs indicate that the Clovis Indians, North America's earliest non-nomadic culture, were the first inhabitants of the area. They were followed in later years by the Tonkawa, Lipan, Apache, and Comanche Indians.

Early Settlements

Spanish explorers passed through the area as early as 1535. On April 25, 1689, Saint Mark's day, Alfonso De Leon named the San Marcos River. In 1755, a Spanish mission was established on the river, but was abandoned two years later because of a drought. In 1808, the Villa San Marcos de Neve was founded at the river crossing of the Camino Real. Felipe Roque de Portilla led 16 families from Mexico to settle in the town; they remained until 1812, when raids from the Tonkawas and Comanche Indians and floods forced its abandonment.

San Marcos in the 19th Century

The Indians remained in control of the area until the 1840's. In 1844, the present City of San Marcos was founded by General Edward Burleson. General Burleson played a prominent role in the Texas War for Independence and was the Republic's fourth Vice President, under President Sam Houston. By 1849, corn and wheat production prompted the construction of the first dam on the river to supply power for grist mills. In 1851, early settlers, Dr. Eli T. Merriman and William L. Lindsey, laid out the original San Marcos streets. San Marcos was incorporated in

1877, and in 1880, the permanence of the town was secured with the extension of the International and Great Northern Railroads through San Marcos.

San Marcos in the 20th Century

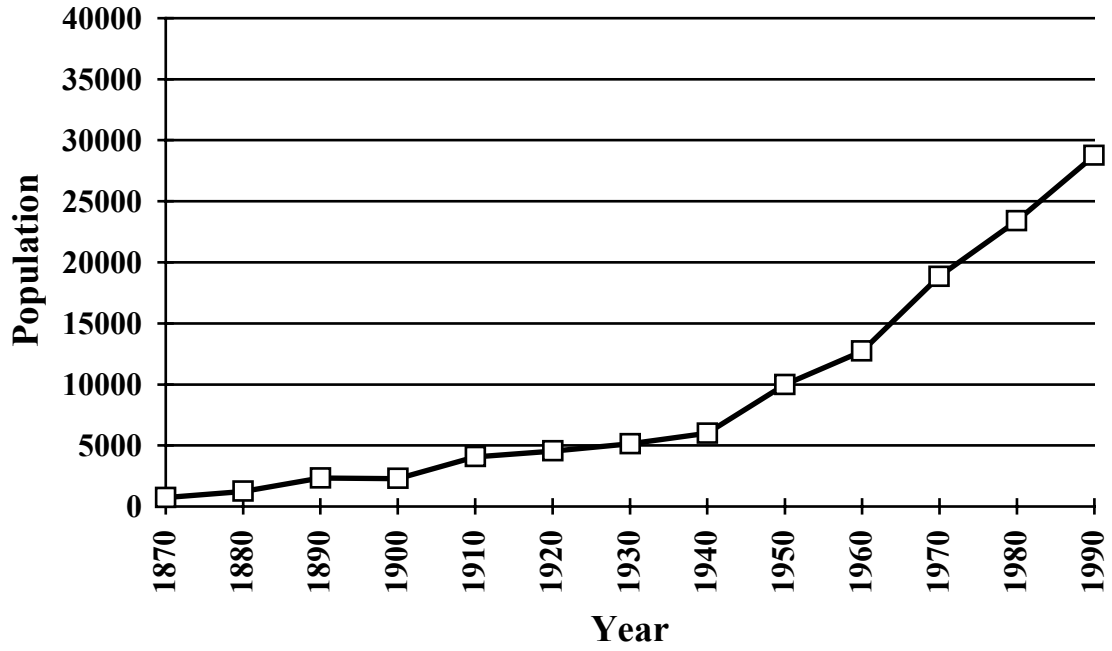
San Marcos entered the 20th century with the founding of Southwest Texas State Normal School in 1899 and the construction of a hydroelectric dam in 1900. From the date of its founding until today, the school has had a major influence on the economy and growth of San Marcos. Over the years, the Texas Legislature has broadened the school's scope and changed its name to reflect its expanded mission. In 1969, the school was renamed Southwest Texas State University (SWT).

The tourism industry began in 1928 with the construction of the Spring Lake Hotel near the headwaters of the San Marcos River. Glass bottom boats began operation on the lake in 1946. Today over 350,000 people annually visit Aquarena Springs. In 1994, SWT acquired Aquarena Springs. The change in ownership marked a shift in emphasis from a "theme park" to one of "ecotourism." Other popular tourist attractions include Wonder World and the San Marcos River. Restoration of many downtown historic buildings between 1984 and 1995 has enhanced the downtown area as a tourist attraction.

By the 1980's, San Marcos had gained a strong industrial employment sector. In 1990, the San Marcos Factory Outlet Mall began operations and today attracts over 3.7 million shoppers to its 110 stores. In 1993, the opening of the Tanger Factory Outlet Center added over 170,000 square feet and an additional 34 stores to San Marcos's factory outlet space.

The population of San Marcos has steadily increased over the years. In 1870, San Marcos had a population of 741. Today, the population of San Marcos is in excess of 37,000. Figure 2-1 presents San Marcos population by decade.

Figure 2-1
San Marcos Population



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

REGIONAL SETTING

San Marcos is located in south-central Texas between the cities of Austin and San Antonio. Three of the ten largest cities in the United States (Houston, Dallas and San Antonio) and 70% of the population of Texas are located within 200 miles of San Marcos. The State of Texas map is presented on the following page.

San Marcos is located along Interstate Highway 35 (IH-35) near the center of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor. Austin, the State Capital, is 26 miles north on IH-35, while San Antonio, a major tourism destination, is 45 miles to the south. Businesses in San Marcos are well positioned to serve the markets in both cities. San Marcos has directly benefited from this strategic location and several companies have chosen to locate their facilities in the city due to its proximity to these large urban markets. Other cities in the Austin-San Antonio Corridor near San Marcos include Kyle, Buda, New Braunfels, Lockhart, Luling, Seguin, Martindale, and Wimberley. The Austin-San Antonio Corridor map is presented on the following page.

San Marcos is designated as part of the Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The Austin-San Marcos MSA includes Hays, Travis, Williamson, Bastrop, and Caldwell counties. The Austin-San Marcos MSA currently has a population exceeding 900,000. The Austin - San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) map is presented on the following page.

San Marcos is the county seat and largest city in Hays County. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, approximately 44% of Hays County's population reside in San Marcos. The majority of the city is located in Hays County with a small part located in Caldwell County. The Extra-

Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) does extend into three adjacent counties (Caldwell, Comal, and Guadalupe). The Hays County map is presented on the following page.

San Marcos is situated along the Balcones Escarpment at the eastern edge of the Texas Hill Country. The escarpment divides the rocky tree-covered hills of the Edwards Plateau from the gently rolling Blackland Prairies to the east.

The City of San Marcos covers over 17 square miles and its ETJ covers an additional 75 square miles. The City of San Marcos Jurisdiction map is presented on the following page.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Geology

The Balcones Escarpment is one of the most prominent geologic structures in the Central Texas region. The escarpment is an ancient fault line that traverses the San Marcos area in northeasterly/southwesterly direction. The extensive faulting has broken and lifted the Cretaceous-aged sedimentary rock to the west of the escarpment and exposed outcrops of Edwards limestone. Water entering the Edwards formation through surface fractures has honeycombed the rock through a dissolving process called solution. Several large caverns have been formed by solution in the San Marcos area including Wonder World Cave, Ezell's Cave and Johnson's Well. This network of fractures and porous limestone form the channels for the water of the Edward's Aquifer.

The Balcones Escarpment forms the boundary between the Edwards Plateau, commonly called the Texas Hill Country, and the Blackland Prairie of the Gulf Coastal Plain. The Edwards Plateau rises to the west of the escarpment and is characterized by limestone formations of the Edwards Plateau group. These are the Georgetown, Person, and Kainer formations. The Georgetown limestone is generally not water bearing and isolated outcrops are found near Kyle, located immediately north of San Marcos. The steep hilly terrain of the Edwards Plateau was created by water erosion of the alternating hard and soft limestone layers.

The Blackland Prairie is located to the east of the Balcones escarpment. The underlying material in the area is erodible chalk and clay-shale. The base is generally covered by thick, organic rich clay soils and the terrain is gently rolling to nearly flat.

Topography

Land elevations in the San Marcos area range from 510 feet above sea level, just east of the city to 1,030 feet above sea level, west of San Marcos. Southeast of the Balcones escarpment, in the Blackland Prairie, the elevations range between 510 and 650 feet. Northwest of the escarpment, on the Edwards Plateau, the elevations range between 650 and 1030 feet.

The Edwards Plateau area has slopes in excess of 30%, while the Blackland Prairie generally has slopes of less than 7%. While slopes between 3% and 15% are generally acceptable for urban development, slopes between 15% and 30% usually require supplemental engineering and specialized construction techniques. Slopes greater than 30% are generally not considered suitable for urban development.

Although development costs are greater in areas with steep slopes, higher priced residential homes continue to be built in the western half of San Marcos. The same hills and slopes that make improvements generally more expensive to construct also attract new builders to their scenic beauty.

Soils

The Edwards Plateau area, located west of the Balcones Escarpment, has generally shallow stony clay and gravely clay loam soils. The soils are thin and overlay a limestone base. The two predominant soil types of the Edwards Plateau in the San Marcos area are described by the United States Department of Agriculture as follows:

A) Comfort-Rumple-Eckrant:

Very shallow to moderately deep, undulating to steep and hilly soils over indurated limestone; on uplands of Edwards Plateau.

B) Krum-Medlin-Eckrant:

Deep, very shallow, and shallow, undulating to steep and hilly soils over clay, shaley clay, and limestone; on stream terraces, valley fills, and uplands of Edwards Plateau.

The shallow soils of the Edwards Plateau are not well suited for agriculture. The predominant rural land uses are ranching, hunting, wildlife management, and outdoor recreation. In urban areas the rocky soils provide for stable foundations but there are numerous development constraints. Construction on rocky soils can be more expensive due to increased site preparation and utility excavation requirements. Soils are often too shallow to adequately filter wastewater from septic fields or runoff from urbanized areas and offer a potential threat of pollution to the aquifer.

The area to the east of the Balcones Escarpment is known as the Blackland Prairie. The soils of this area are generally characterized as thick, black, clay. The soils are deep and overlay chalk or shale base. The three predominant Blackland Prairie soil types in the San Marcos area are described by the United States Department of Agriculture as follows:

A) Heiden-Houston Black:

Deep, gently sloping soils over clay and shale; on uplands of the Blackland Prairie.

B) Lewisville-Gruene-Krum:

Deep, shallow, and very shallow, nearly level to gently sloping soils over loamy, clay, and gravelly sediments; on stream terraces and valley fills of Blackland Prairie and Edwards Plateau.

C) Branyon-Krum:

Deep, nearly level to gently sloping soils over clayey sediments; on ancient stream terraces and valley fills of Blackland Prairie.

In rural areas, the Blackland Prairie soils are well suited for agriculture and ranching. These soils are generally fertile and extensive terracing is not required to prevent erosion. The high clay content of the soils are a major constraint for development because the soils shrink and swell during wet and dry periods. Foundations built on Heiden-Houston Black or Branyon-Krum soils are especially susceptible to damage. These soils swell when wet and shrink and crack as they dry causing enough pressure to crack walls and foundations that are not properly designed and constructed.

The Edwards Aquifer and the San Marcos River

The Edwards Aquifer is the water-bearing underground network of porous and honeycombed limestone formation of the Edwards Plateau. The southern segment of the aquifer stretches for 180 miles along the Balcones Escarpment from Brackettville to just north of San Marcos. It provides water for over 1.5 million people, irrigation for thousands of acres of cropland, and is the source for several water-based tourist attractions.

The catchment area is the area in the Edwards Plateau that provides the drainage water to recharge the aquifer. The drainage basins in the Edwards Aquifer catchment area cover 4,400 square miles throughout seven counties.

There are four zones associated with the Edwards Aquifer:

The recharge zone is the area of exposed porous or fractured limestone at the base of the Edwards Plateau. The recharge zone is generally located east of the catchment zone. Water in streams coming from the catchment area, as well as rain falling over the recharge zone, runs directly into the fractures and other karst features, such as caves and sinkholes, and continues down into the artesian area of the aquifer. It is estimated that 90-95% of the recharge occurs in stream beds. An area closely associated with the recharge zone is the transition zone.

The transition zone is an area located immediately to the south and southeast of the recharge zone where faults, fractures, and other geologic features present possible avenues for recharge of surface water into the Edwards Aquifer. The major part of San Marcos, located to the northwest of IH-35, is in the transition zone.

The artesian zone is the area of pressurized fresh water. The zone ranges between 5 to 30 miles in width and underlies 3,600 square miles in six counties. The water of the artesian zone is discharged through wells and natural springs.

The saline zone is an area of saline ground water that abuts the artesian zone. Test wells in the parking lot of Aquarena Springs indicate the presence of saline water only a few hundred feet from the springs. It is thought that significantly reduced water levels in the aquifer may allow the saline water to migrate and contaminate the artesian zone.

Efforts to enhance the recharge of the aquifer have included the construction of dams on streams over the recharge zone. The flood control dams constructed on Purgatory and Sink Creeks by the Soil Conservation Services also provide recharge enhancement.

The rapid growth of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor continues to place an ever increasing demand on the aquifer water supply. Projections done by Glenn Longley in 1975, and by W.B. Klemt in 1979, indicate that flows could cease from the San Marcos Springs during the early 21st century if current water usage trends continue. In 1993, in response to a federal judge's order, the Texas Legislature enacted a bill creating the Edwards Aquifer Authority to regulate water usage in the southern portion of the Edwards Aquifer. Although that bill was challenged under the Federal Voting Rights Act, the legislature enacted a second bill in 1995 which addressed the concerns raised by the challenge. The new legislation authorizes the authority to implement:

- aquifer pumpage limits for major water users;
- enforcement of water management practices to ensure the flow of the Comal and San Marcos Springs;
- a comprehensive water management plan; and
- a critical period management plan.

The goal of the law is to preserve the flow of Comal and San Marcos Springs by reducing permitted water pumping to 450,000 acre feet per year until 2007, and then 400,000 acre feet per year after 2007. Current withdrawals from the Edwards Aquifer often exceed 500,000 acre feet per year.

The aquifer discharges water into Spring Lake through five major springs and numerous minor springs, at an average rate of 155 cubic feet per second. These springs provide the source water for the San Marcos River. The San Marcos River, approximately 70 miles in length, flows from the headwaters at Spring Lake (to the confluence with the Blanco River, approximately four miles downstream) and terminates at its confluence with the Guadalupe River. The water is clear and maintains a constant temperature of 72°F. The springs and rivers are important tourist attractions and contributes to the high quality of life enjoyed by the community..

The constant flow and temperature of the spring water has created a unique ecosystem in Spring Lake and the San Marcos River. The water provides habitat for several endangered species. This ecosystem could be adversely affected through increased urban runoff, flow interruption, or bank modification. The City of San Marcos is developing a San Marcos River Habitat Conservation Plan to protect endangered species and recreational use of the river in cooperation with Southwest Texas State University and other agencies.

Urban development on the recharge zone poses the greatest threat for aquifer contamination. Chapter 313 of the Texas Administrative Code defines the recharge zone as an area where the stratigraphic units constituting the Edwards Aquifer crop out, and including the outcrops of other geologic formations in proximity to the Edwards Aquifer, where caves, sinkholes, faults, fractures, or other permeable features would create a potential for recharge of surface waters into the Edwards Aquifer. This statute authorizes and specifies regulations concerning new development over the recharge and transition zones of the aquifer. These regulations are

administered by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). In order to protect the aquifer, the TNRCC regulates any construction related activities that alter or disturb, topographical, geological, or existing recharge characteristics of the site.

These regulations require a water pollution abatement plan to be filed and approved by TNRCC prior to the commencement of any regulated construction over the recharge and transition zones. The plan must include a geological survey, a technical assessment of the impact of the development on the aquifer recharge zone, and a description of measures that will be taken to prevent pollution of storm waters originating on-site. The TNRCC regulations do not apply to single family residential development on lots greater than five acres in size.

In addition, both Hays County and the City of San Marcos regulate development over the recharge zone. Hays County requires a minimum lot size of one acre for lots with private wastewater systems and a half-acre minimum lot size for lots with private water systems. San Marcos land development regulations require compliance with TNRCC rules, and require the designation of critical water quality zones around surface recharge features. In addition, San Marcos requires contaminant removal and sedimentation basins if storm water runoff has the potential to contain high contaminant levels.

Watersheds and Flood Plains

Watersheds

A watershed is defined as an area or region drained by a river system or other body of water. The San Marcos River and the Comal River in New Braunfels are part of the Guadalupe River watershed. The Guadalupe River watershed receives 50% to 70% of its base flow from the springs that flow into these rivers.

The seven watersheds within the study area include Sink Creek, Purgatory Creek, Willow Springs Creek, Hemphill Creek, Cottonwood Creek, the Blanco River, and the San Marcos River. The drainage basins for Sink Creek, Purgatory Creek, and Willow Springs Creek comprise almost all of the upper San Marcos River watershed.

Flood Plains

Heavy rainfalls associated with tropical and frontal systems occur periodically in San Marcos. When combined with the rapid runoff associated with steep topography and increased impervious cover, the rainfalls can quickly cause disastrous floods. Major floods have occurred several times during the last 75 years, with the most severe occurring in 1921, 1929, 1970, 1972, 1974, and 1981. The most catastrophic was the 1970 flood that resulted in two deaths and the inundation of approximately 2,000 acres within the city.

The Soil Conservation Service has constructed five dams on Purgatory and Sink creeks and has improved channels on Purgatory and Willow Springs creeks to reduce the amount of flood waters entering the city. After the completion of these projects in 1990, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) revised the city's designated flood plain maps. This revision substantially reduced the amount of flood plain in the city. The city has also installed electronic flood warning systems on Purgatory and Sink Creeks. Although the dams have significantly reduced the threat of urban flooding, they have also had the unintentional affect of causing a

major siltation problem in the San Marcos River. The flood control dams have slowed down the natural flushing action of the flood waters.

The City of San Marcos is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program created by Congress in 1968. This program allows city residents to purchase flood insurance at federally subsidized rates. The city has worked with FEMA to produce a study of the city's flood plains. The city has also adopted a Flood Prevention Ordinance and maintains a Flood Plain Administrator on staff to oversee the program.

The maps produced in the FEMA study divide the city into four flood zone categories: the floodway, the 100 year flood plain, the 500 year flood plain, and the area not within the flood plain. The San Marcos Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance prohibits construction, excavation, fill, loose debris, or other encroachments in the floodway. The floodway is defined as the channel of a stream and any adjacent areas that must be kept free of encroachments so that a 100 year flood can be carried without substantial increases in flood height. The ordinance permits construction within 100 year flood plain provided finished floor elevations are at or above the elevation of the 100 year flood. The 100 year flood plain is defined by FEMA as an area with a 1% or greater chance of being flooded within the given year. The 500 year flood plain is an area with a 0.2% or greater chance of being flooded within a given year.

The city recently prepared a Drainage Master Plan. The plan prioritized needed drainage improvements, evaluated funding alternatives, and established acceptable levels of drainage service. The plan identified $25 million in needed improvements for the urbanized area.

Current Drainage and Water Quality Regulations

On August 1, 1985, pursuant to a recommendation of the 1983 master plan, San Marcos enacted an ordinance regulating development and drainage adjacent to the San Marcos River. The stated objectives of the San Marcos River Corridor Ordinance were to prevent the unnecessary loss of vegetation and soils, reduce soil erosion during and after development, prevent increases in the rate and volume of storm water runoff, and prevent or reduce pollutants in storm water runoff. Developments must retain on site the first 1/2 inch of runoff from impervious cover for an average of 24 hours. The ordinance also restricts the amount of impervious cover allowed, the amount of excavation that may occur, and prohibits the use of septic systems.

The San Marcos Drainage and Erosion Control Ordinance applies to all land within the city and the extra-territorial jurisdiction for the purpose of protecting the San Marcos River, portions of the Blanco River, and the Edwards Aquifer from the effects of water quality deterioration due to pollution. Developments meeting certain size requirements are required to prepare a detailed storm water runoff and erosion report to qualify for a permit. The ordinance also restricts development of steep slopes and amount of impervious cover allowed on a site.

Climate

San Marcos has a mild climate with approximately 230 days of sunshine annually. San Marcos experiences mild seasonal weather changes due to a prevailing southeastern wind and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. The annual median daily temperature in San Marcos is 68°F. During August, the normal maximum temperature is 97°F. During January, the normal minimum temperature is 40°F. Freezing temperatures occur approximately 25 days per year, and measurable snowfall is rare.

Average annual rainfall in San Marcos is 33 inches, with 40% of the precipitation occurring between April and June. Thunderstorms occur approximately 40 days per year, primarily in association with spring cold fronts and tropical storms. The table on the following page indicates the average monthly rainfall and temperature for the city.

Except for occasional northerly shifts during the winter, the prevailing wind is from the southeast, with an average wind speed of 10 miles per hour. The annual average humidity level is 60%.

The air in San Marcos is relatively clean. Daily maximum ozone levels in San Marcos remain below the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, as the region continues to grow, ambient air quality in San Marcos may be impacted by the air quality in adjacent urban areas.

Average Monthly Rainfall and Temperature
San Marcos

Month	1980-1993 Average Monthly Rainfall	1985-1993 Average Maximum Temperature	1985-1993 Average Minimum Temperature
January	1.77	61.8F	40.1F
February	1.82	65.8F	43.3F
March	2.25	73.5F	48.8F
April	1.96	80.1F	57.0F
May	5.46	86.0F	65.2F
June	6.11	91.4F	71.5F
July	1.53	94.5F	73.3F
August	1.70	96.6F	73.3F
September	3.25	91.0F	68.5F
October	2.63	81.8F	57.1F
November	3.48	71.3F	48.3F
December	1.66	62.5F	41.0F
Annual Average	**33.62**	**79.7F**	**57.3F**

Source: National Weather Service Forms B-91, San Marcos Electric Utility Department

Vegetation

San Marcos is located on the boundary of the Balconian and Texan provinces. The Balconian Province, located to the west of the Balcones Escarpment, includes all of the Edwards Plateau region. Oak-Juniper plant associations predominate in the area with Mexican cedar, Texas oak, and the live oak growing in clumps interspersed with open grasslands. Other commonly found plant species include buffalo grass, gramma grass, panic grass, mesquite, Texas persimmon, algarita, Texas prickly pear, and Texas mountain laurel.

The Texan province, located to the east of the Balcones Escarpment, is bounded on the east by the pine forests of East Texas, and on the west by the grasslands of the Balconian province. Principal trees in the San Marcos area are live oak, post oak, blackjack oak, and hickory. Stands of trees occur mainly along the stream and river banks. Within the San Marcos area, the majority of the original tree cover of the Texan province has been cleared. This tree cover has been replaced by agricultural crops and rangeland grasses. Principal crops in the area include cotton, sorghum, and corn. Rangeland grasses include native and coastal Bermuda, Dallas grass, and blue stem.

A diverse mixture of the two provinces exists along the San Marcos River. Species found include bald cypress, pecan, cedar elm, Mexican juniper, live oak, hackberry, and box elder. Dense growths of elephant ear plants, which are not native to the San Marcos area, can be found along the water's edge in areas where the river banks are not developed. Vegetation in the river includes water hyacinth, floating primrose, willow, eel grass, fan wort, and common hornwort. Several isolated patches of Texas wild rice are also found in the river. Texas wild rice, an endangered plant, has evolved in isolation in the San Marcos River and is recognized as being the only natural population known to exist in the world.

Stands of bald cypress and a variety of ferns are located along the Blanco River. Small, localized populations of dwarf palm are found along Purgatory and Sink creeks. Other plants located in the San Marcos area include basin bellflower, rough leaf dogwood, brush myrtlecroton, roemer euphorbia, and the Texas berberis.

Urban development, in most cases, is destructive to the floral habitat. The area along the San Marcos River is especially susceptible to damage. The river bank vegetation slows and filters rainfall runoff into the river. Additional sediment can retard aquatic plant growth by reducing the sunlight available for photosynthesis. The plant life along the river and creeks also provides travel corridors for wildlife.

Current Development Regulations

The San Marcos River Corridor Ordinance and the Drainage and Erosion Control Ordinance both regulate the removal of vegetation by restricting the amount of impervious cover permitted for new developments. The city also has an ordinance regulating the landscaping of new developments. The Landscaping and Buffering Ordinance requires landscaping on at least 20% of the site for apartments, 15% for offices, and 10% for commercial and industrial developments. In addition, the ordinance encourages the preservation of trees by providing landscape area credits if they are not removed.

Wildlife

San Marcos has abundant wildlife. Raccoons, squirrels, opossum, nutria, dove, white-tail and axis deer, and rabbits are commonly found in the city. Turkey, bobcat, skunk, ringtail cat, beaver, bobwhite quail, coyote, fox, javalina and more deer are generally found in the rural areas surrounding the city. The wooded river-bottoms of the San Marcos and Blanco rivers are inhabited by typical species found in the Central Texas region. Common fish found in the rivers include bass, catfish, perch, gar, shiners, eel, crappie, shad, and carp.

The constant temperature and steady flow of the San Marcos River has supported the evolution of several species of fish, animals, and plants that are indigenous only to Spring Lake or the spring run of the San Marcos River. The San Marcos gambusia, the San Marcos salamander, fountain darter, and Texas wild rice are plants and animal species endemic to the upper San Marcos River, and are all included on the Federal Endangered Species List.

In 1991, the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club filed suit in Federal Court against the U.S. Department of Interior, alleging that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service failed to enforce the Endangered Species Act by not implementing plans to protect spring flows at the Comal and San Marcos Springs. The City of San Marcos joined the Sierra Club as a plaintiff in the case. On February 1, 1993, Federal Judge Lucius Bunton found that spring flow from the Comal and San Marcos Springs must be protected, even during a record drought, in order to protect the endangered species that depend on the springs for life. This ruling led to the passage of the Edwards Aquifer Authority Act. One of the major goals of this legislation is to implement and enforce water management practices to ensure flows at the springs, thereby providing critical habitat for the endangered species.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land Use

In 1999, the City of San Marcos Planning and Development Services Department conducted an existing land use survey of property within the city limits. This survey included existing land uses, residential unit conditions, existing zoning, and master plan designations.

The existing land use survey indicated a City of San Marcos acreage of 9,676.71, or 15.12 square miles. Including roadway and railroad right-of-way acreage, San Marcos has a total size of 17.63 square miles. The Existing Land Use map is presented on the following page. A summary of existing land uses by category are:

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percentage
Public and Institutional	2,961.82	26%
Vacant Land	2,784.45	25%
Residential	2,068.04	19%
Right of Way	1,609.71	14%
Parks and Open Space	816.73	7%
Commercial	631.19	6%
Industrial	414.22	4%

Public and Institutional

The largest percentage of acreage in the City of San Marcos is public and institutional (26%) land use including Southwest Texas State University, the San Marcos Municipal Airport, public and private schools, churches, City of San Marcos property, and Hays County facilities. Most of this land is tax exempt.

Vacant Land

Twenty five percent of the acreage in the City of San Marcos is vacant land. Thirty-three percent of the vacant land is located on the south side of the city along IH-35. Nineteen percent of the vacant acreage is located on the north side of the city along IH-35.

Residential

Nineteen percent of the acreage in the City of San Marcos is residential land use. Residential includes single family, duplex, mobile home, and multifamily land uses. The majority of single family units located within the city limits are located north of Southwest Texas State University and west of downtown. Strong growth of single family units within the ETJ is seen southwest of the city along Hunter Road. Multifamily units are dispersed throughout the city with concentrations around Southwest Texas State University and along IH-35 on the east side of the city.

San Marcos has a total of 15,532 residential units. Forty four percent are multifamily and 32% are single family and duplex units. In addition, five percent are mobile homes. The residential unit counts also include group quarters (dormitories and institutions). SWT houses approximately 3,000 students per semester in on-campus dormitories.

In addition, adjacent to the San Marcos city limits is Gary Job Corps which provides on-campus housing for their 2,200 students, and 109 housing units for faculty and staff.

Parks and Open Space

Seven percent of the acreage in the City of San Marcos is parks and open space. Parks are dispersed throughout the city, with concentrations along the San Marcos River.

Commercial

Six percent of the acreage in the City of San Marcos is commercial land uses, which includes retail and office uses. The majority of commercial units in San Marcos are located in the central business district, at intersections of major thoroughfares, along IH-35, and at major tourist attractions.

Industrial

Four percent of the acreage in the City of San Marcos is industrial land uses, which includes manufacturing and warehouse uses. Seventy-four percent of the industrial land use acreage is located along the west side of IH-35 on the south side of the city.

Current Development Regulations

State Statutes, the City Charter and the Code of Ordinances grant legal authority to the City of San Marcos to regulate the use of land within the city limits. In addition, State statutes grant authority to regulate the subdivision of land within the two mile extra-territorial jurisdiction. The City of San Marcos exercises this authority by enforcing adopted ordinances. Current development regulations of the city include the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, building codes, flood hazard regulations, landscaping regulations, sign regulations, historic building regulations, and the drainage regulations. These ordinances are the tools used to implement the policies of the city's master plan.

Housing

The existing land use survey indicated there were 4,437 single family homes in the City of San Marcos. A summary of the residential unit conditions by category are:

Residential Unit Condition	Number of Single Family Homes	Percentage
Standard	4,319	97%
Substandard	118	3%

Standard

There are 4,319 single family homes in the city that are considered in standard condition. A structure classified as standard is a building that is in relatively good condition needing only minor repairs.

Substandard

There are 118 single family homes in the city that are considered in substandard condition. Substandard homes have one or more violations of the minimum building standards of the city or do not provide safe and adequate shelter. The violations can include inadequate sanitation, structural hazards, faulty weather protection, hazardous wiring, plumbing, or mechanical equipment, or missing roofing material. In 1994, The City of San Marcos established a substandard structure abatement program funded through the city's Community Development Block Grant. Thus far, over 30 substandard structures have been demolished and an additional 60 structures are proposed to be demolished. In addition, 23 substandard structures have been remodeled and repaired and brought up to standard condition.

Transportation

The existing system of streets and thoroughfares in San Marcos has developed in response to historical development patterns and natural constraints over the past 140 years. Many of the major thoroughfares in San Marcos were built as part of the state highway system. IH-35, Loop 82 (Aquarena Springs Drive, University Drive, Guadalupe Street, and LBJ Street); RR 12 (Hopkins Street, Moore Street, and Smith Street); FM 2439 (Hopkins Street and Hunter Road); FM 3407 (Wonder World Drive); SH 21; SH 80; FM 621 (Staples Road); FM 1984; and SH 123 are all state owned and maintained. These streets, along with IH-35, provide San Marcos with excellent regional access but do not provide a fully developed internal circulation system.

The state owned and maintained roads, the 125 miles of city owned and maintained streets, and the rural routes throughout the ETJ can best be presented through the functional classifications of the streets. The following functional classifications are recommended by the National Committee on Urban Transportation and printed in the *Practice of Local Government Planning, ICMA, 1979.*

Expressway - This class of streets is devoted entirely to traffic movement with little or no land service function. Thus, it is characterized by at least some degree of access control. This classification is usually reserved for multi-lane, divided roads with few, if any, intersections at grade. Expressways serve large volumes of high speed traffic and are primarily intended to serve long trips. IH-35 is an example of an expressway in San Marcos.

Arterial - This class of streets brings traffic to and from the expressway and serves major movements of traffic within or through the parts of the urban area that are not served by expressways. Major and minor arterials interconnect the principal traffic generators within a city. Arterials handle trips between different areas of the city and should form a reasonably integrated

system. Aquarena Springs Drive, Hunter Road, Guadalupe Street, Sessom Drive, Wonder World Drive, and SH 80 are examples of arterial streets in San Marcos.

Collector - This class of streets serves internal traffic movements within an area of a city, such as a subdivision, and connects this area with the arterial system. Collectors do not handle long trips and are not usually continuous for any great length. In a gridiron street pattern, however, a street of considerable length may serve as a collector rather than an arterial if the predominant use is to reach the next junction of an arterial. Broadway Street, Franklin Drive, and Riverside Drive are examples of collector streets in San Marcos.

Local - The sole function of local streets is to provide access to adjacent land. These streets make up a large percentage of the total street mileage of the city but carry a small proportion of the total vehicle traffic. In and around the central business district (CBD) local streets may carry traffic volumes measured in the thousands, but this is an exception. Local residential streets in usually carry daily volumes of 1,000 vehicles or less.

In 1990, the Goodman Corporation conducted the San Marcos Mobility Plan, to develop an action plan for improvements to the city's roadway system. This study included both the urban and the surrounding rural roadway system, and involved the use of a traffic modeling system called Quick Response System (QRS II). Data such as roadway design specifications, traffic counts, workplaces and dwelling unit locations, population, and roadway speeds were utilized to simulate traffic flow throughout the city. Once the system was calibrated, and all the proper checks were performed, the QRS II traffic model simulated traffic characteristics including turning movements, vehicle speeds, delays, and time-of-day volume variations.

The accepted capacity for 24 hour traffic volumes is 13,000 vehicles per lane for freeways and 5,000 vehicles per lane for arterial streets. On the basis of this data, the QRS II produced a report

that indicated volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios of roadways within the roadway system. The V/C ratio compared the design capacity of a roadway to the total volume of use that occurred during a 24 hour period. A V/C ratio of 1.0 means that the roadway is functioning at design capacity. However, a V/C ratio of more than 1.0 means that the roadway is functioning at over-capacity.

The study listed 62 individual improvement projects to be completed between 1990 and 2000. Several key projects were identified as being the most important. The projects included the construction of FM 110, widening of RR 12 from the city limits to Hopkins Street, widening of Hunter Road, improvements to Post Road, widening IH-35 frontage roads to three lanes and converting to one-way traffic, an extension of Bishop Street from LBJ Drive to Lime Kiln Road, and the widening of IH-35.

OVER-CAPACITY SEGMENTS OF ARTERIAL STREETS (1990)

(San Marcos Mobility Plan, Goodman Corporation, 1990)

STREET NAME	V/C RATIO	LENGTH (MILES)
Aquarena Springs Dr. — IH-35 southbound to IH-35 northbound	1.77	0.11
Hopkins St./SH-80 — IH-35 southbound to IH-35 northbound	1.00	0.09
Hunter Rd. — Wonder World Dr. to Suttles St.	1.11	0.74
IH-35 northbound Frontage Rd. — Aquarena Springs Dr. to Uhland Rd.	2.15	0.25
Martin Luther King Dr. — Comanche St. to Guadalupe St.	0.92	0.14
Post Rd. — Lime Kiln Rd. to Aquarena Springs Dr.	1.03	0.40
Post Rd. — Lime Kiln Rd. to Uhland Rd.	1.12	0.27
River Road — SH 80 to Old Martindale Rd.	1.03	0.70
RR 12 — Bishop St. to Country Estates (County Rd. 226)	1.21	0.55
RR 12 — Franklin Dr. to Holland St.	1.04	0.15
RR 12 — Hughson Dr. to Bishop St.	1.02	0.27
SH 21 — Harris Hill Rd. (County Rd. 160) to Airport Dr.	1.19	0.11
SH 21 — Bogie St. to Harris Hill Rd. (County Rd. 160)	0.95	0.72
SH 21 — Bogie St. to SH 80	0.95	0.98
SH 80 — SH 21 to River Road	1.11	0.38
SH 80 — River Road to IH-35 northbound	0.91	0.53
University Dr. — Bobcat Dr. to Sessom Dr.	0.97	0.19

NOTE: This list excludes the recently improved segments of Aquarena Springs Dr., and is updated to reflect the renaming of a portion of Bugg Ln. to Bobcat Dr., the renaming of a portion of N. LBJ Dr. to Bishop St., and the realignment of the Bishop St./RR 12 intersection.

More recent traffic counts indicate that, in addition to those listed, other segments currently functioning near or over capacity based on the same criteria include: 1) East Hopkins St. between IH-35 and Thorpe Ln.; 2) East Hopkins St./Hunter Rd. between RR 12 and Wonder World Dr.; 3) RR 12 between West Hopkins St. and Holland St.; 4) Guadalupe St. between Martin Luther King Dr. and IH 35; 5) SH 80 between IH 35 and Wal-Mart; and 6) Bobcat Dr. between University Dr. and the city park access street.

The San Marcos Mobility Plan identified the follow items as constraints to the improvement of the San Marcos transportation system.

Flood plains - In the San Marcos area the two rivers, the San Marcos and the Blanco, and numerous other creeks, all have extensive flood plains associated with them. The impact of transportation improvements on the flood plain, and additional design and cost factors must be considered.

Terrain - San Marcos is located on the transition between the Blackland Prairie and the Edwards Plateau along the Balcones fault. The Edwards Plateau area to the west has steep slopes, thin soils, and limestone bedrock. These features make construction and alignment of roadways more difficult. The Blackland Prairie area to the east is flatter, but the expansive soils necessitate extensive base preparation and maintenance requirements are greater than normal.

Existing land uses - Existing land uses have a major impact on the alignment, design capacity, and cost of transportation improvements. For example, Southwest Texas State University is a major constraint on the north-south flow of traffic through the city.

Railroads - The Union Pacific Railroad has two rail lines that bisect San Marcos. The rail lines cross numerous roads at grade including 10 of the city's major thoroughfares. The substantial delays experienced by drivers are not only an inconvenience, but also pose a public safety hazard from trains blocking intersections during medical, police, and fire emergencies. This problem is especially severe during medical emergencies, since the Central Texas Medical Center is located on the east side of the railroad tracks, and the majority of San Marcos residents live on the west side of the railroad tracks.

The Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone - This aquifer is the sole source for potable water in many cities including San Marcos located along its 180 mile path, therefore, its protection and management are critically important. Since the Edwards Aquifer recharges when surface water percolates through the porous limestone, any project that creates impervious cover or that is a source of possible pollutants must conduct all appropriate environmental studies and storm water runoff controls.

Traffic Signals

Almost all the traffic signals in San Marcos are owned and maintained by TxDOT. The City of San Marcos owns and maintains three traffic signal lights. These are located at Sessom Drive and Peques Street, LBJ Drive and Sessom Drive, and Post Road and Uhland Road. A warrant study must be performed prior to the installation of a new traffic signal.

Public Transportation

There are several entities providing transit services in San Marcos. The largest is the Southwest Texas State University (SWT) shuttle bus system. SWT contracts with Durham Inc. to provide transportation to and from satellite parking, intra-campus service, and shuttle service to and from many residential areas in the community for students and staff. Durham Inc. also operates a student/staff commuter shuttle between Austin and San Marcos.

Community Action of Hays, Caldwell and Blanco counties operates a demand-responsive van system for elderly, handicapped, and low income citizens.

The Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) began a community-wide bus service in June, 1995. The system includes seven routes that link residential areas and the factory outlet malls to the central business district. The project uses rubber tired antique style street cars ("trolleys") and buses.

The Greyhound Bus Lines station is located near the intersection of IH-35 and Guadalupe Street and provides services to other cities.

Air Service

The San Marcos Municipal Airport provides general aviation and corporate air service for the San Marcos area. The airport is classified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a reliever airport in the regional airport system. This system includes Robert Mueller Airport in Austin and International Airport in San Antonio. The facilities at the airport include four runways, corporate aircraft and maintenance hangers, a full service fixed base operator facility, and a terminal building. An airport master plan update was performed in 1992.

Rail Service

Rail freight service is available in San Marcos from the Union Pacific Railroad, which operates and maintains both rail lines that pass through the city (consolidated from previously separate ownership by the Missouri Pacific Railroad and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad). Union Pacific Railroad trains pass through San Marcos approximately 40 times per day, running north and south. It is one of the nation's major rail-freight systems, serving 19 states and linking the Pacific coast and the Texas Gulf Coast.

Amtrak also provides north and south bound service to San Marcos. The community constructed Amtrak stop is located near the intersection of Edward Gary Street and LBJ Drive.

Downtown / University Area

Central Business District

The San Marcos Central Business District (CBD), originally developed during the late 1800's, is the largest, most intensely developed, mixed-use area within the city. The focal point of the CBD is the traditional courthouse square, bounded on all four sides by major streets. Various land uses surround the courthouse including retail, government, professional office, restaurants, bars, and second floor apartments. In 1995, the courthouse began planning for a major restoration and interior renovation. Court functions were moved two blocks south to a newly renovated criminal justice center. The northern fringes of the CBD, between the courthouse square and Southwest Texas State University (SWT), contain various commercial and entertainment businesses that serve the needs of college students as well as all San Marcos residents.

There are three overlapping districts in the CBD. The largest district is the *Main Street Project*, bounded by University Drive on the north, the San Marcos River on the east, Martin Luther King (MLK) on the south, and Comanche Street on the west. It is one of the targeted areas for historic revitalization and economic development in San Marcos and businesses within this area are eligible for financial and technical assistance including low interest business improvement loans from local banks.

A smaller district is the *Central Business Area (CBA) zoning district*, bounded by University Drive on the north, the alley between LBJ Drive and Edward Gary Street on the east, Martin Luther King (MLK) on the south, and Fredericksburg Street on the west. The CBA zoning district is similar to the Commercial (C) zoning district in terms of permitted uses, but eliminates the requirements for front and side-yard setbacks, and for off-street parking on individual lots. The areas surrounding the CBA zoning district are generally zoned for commercial uses.

The smallest district is the *Downtown Historic District*, which includes the courthouse and the buildings surrounding the courthouse square. The courthouse square was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained from the Historic Preservation Commission prior to any exterior alteration of a property in this district.

Southwest Texas State University (SWT)

Southwest Texas State University opened its doors as Southwest Normal School in 1899 with 303 students and 17 faculty members. Ninety years later, SWT has grown from a small two-year teacher training institution to a major multi-purpose university. It is Texas' seventh largest university with approximately 21,000 students. It is a state-supported public university that offers 130 undergraduate and 42 graduate degree programs. The 333 acre campus dominates the city's skyline.

Historic Districts

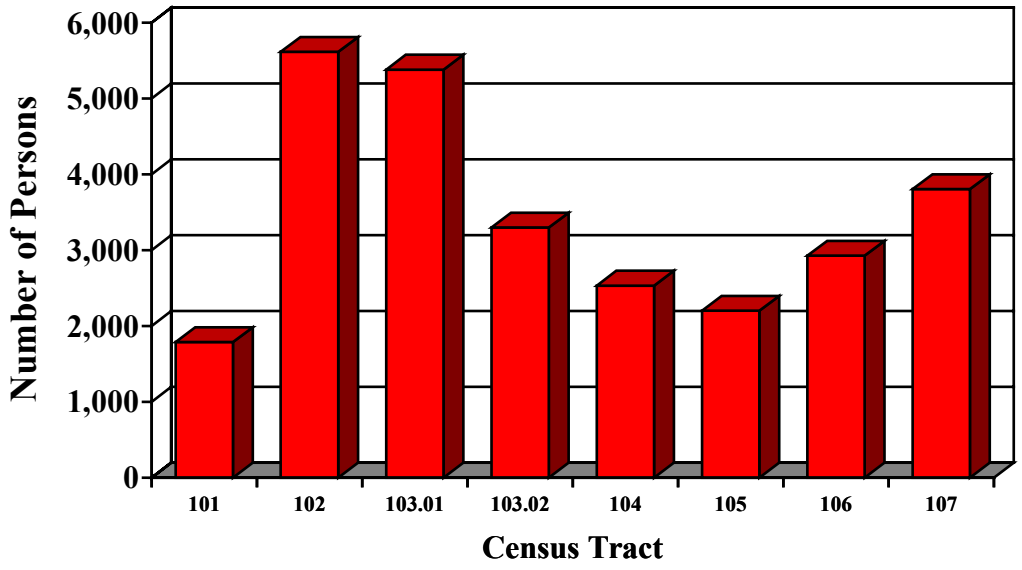
Historic districts in San Marcos include the courthouse square surrounded by turn-of-the-century offices and shops, as well as tree-lined blocks of Victorian and cottage-style homes. The historic districts include the Belvin Street area, the San Antonio Street area, and the downtown area. These historic districts were established in 1974, 1982, and 1986, respectively. The Belvin Street and downtown areas are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Districts map is presented on the following page.

THE PEOPLE OF SAN MARCOS

Population

The 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census population count for San Marcos was 28,743. Eighty percent of the population is located west of IH-35 and 20% on the east. Figure 2-2 presents San Marcos population by census tract. Census tract 102, located west of Southwest Texas State University, contains the largest concentration of the population; over 5,600 people.

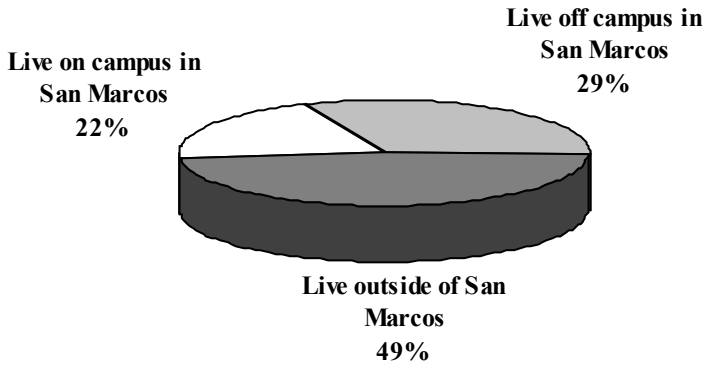
Figure 2-2
San Marcos Population
by Census Tract (1990)



The Planning and Development Services Department population estimate for the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) is 7,000 persons. The majority of people in the ETJ live west of IH-35.

Southwest Texas State University (SWT) had a 1994 enrollment of approximately 21,000 students. According to the SWT Institutional Research and Planning, 10,800 students lived in San Marcos, whereas, another 10,000 students commuted to school in 1994. Students commute primarily from within the Austin-San Antonio Corridor. Figure 2-3 presents the residency status of SWT students in 1994.

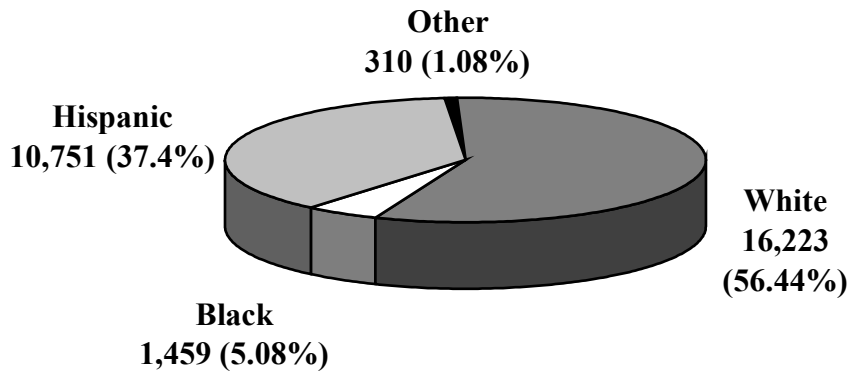
Figure 2-3
Southwest Texas State University
Students Residency Status (1994)



Ethnicity

The people of San Marcos are ethnically diverse. According to the 1990 census, the population is 57% White, 37% Hispanic, 5% Black, and 1% other. Figure 2-4 presents San Marcos population by ethnicity.

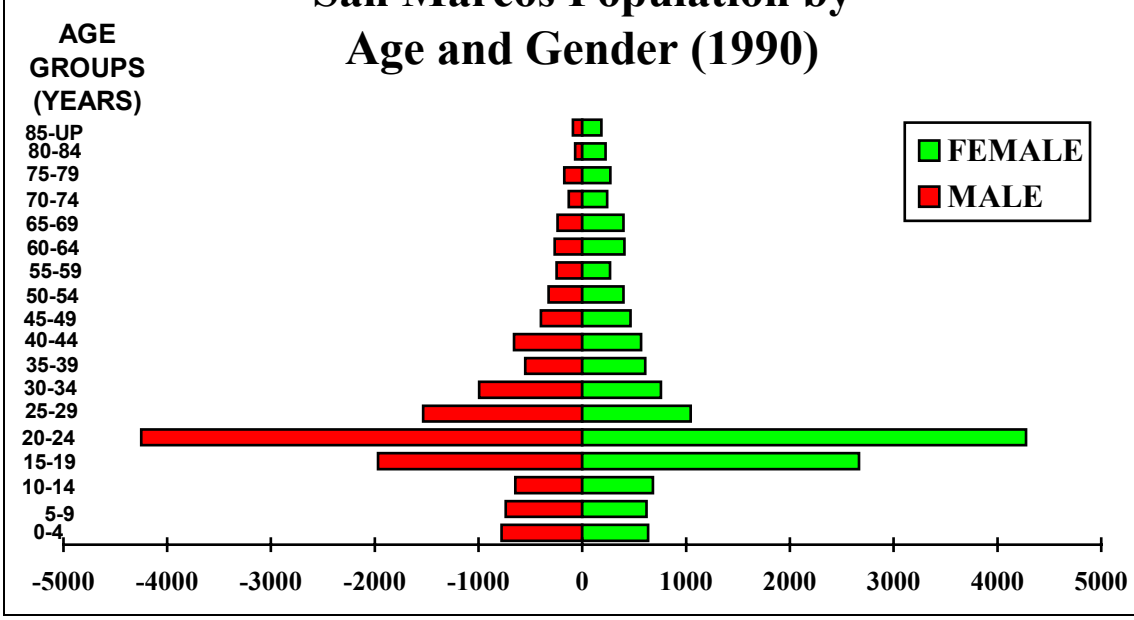
Figure 2-4
San Marcos Population by Ethnicity (1990)



Age and Gender

The population of San Marcos is predominately young. The chart below shows the impact of the city's large student population. According to the 1990 Census, the median age in San Marcos is 22.9 years old. Seventeen percent of the population is under the age of 18. Forty-three percent of the population is between 18 and 24 years, and the remaining 40% is over 24 years. Females make up 51% of the population, while males comprise 49%. Figure 2-5 presents San Marcos population by age and gender.

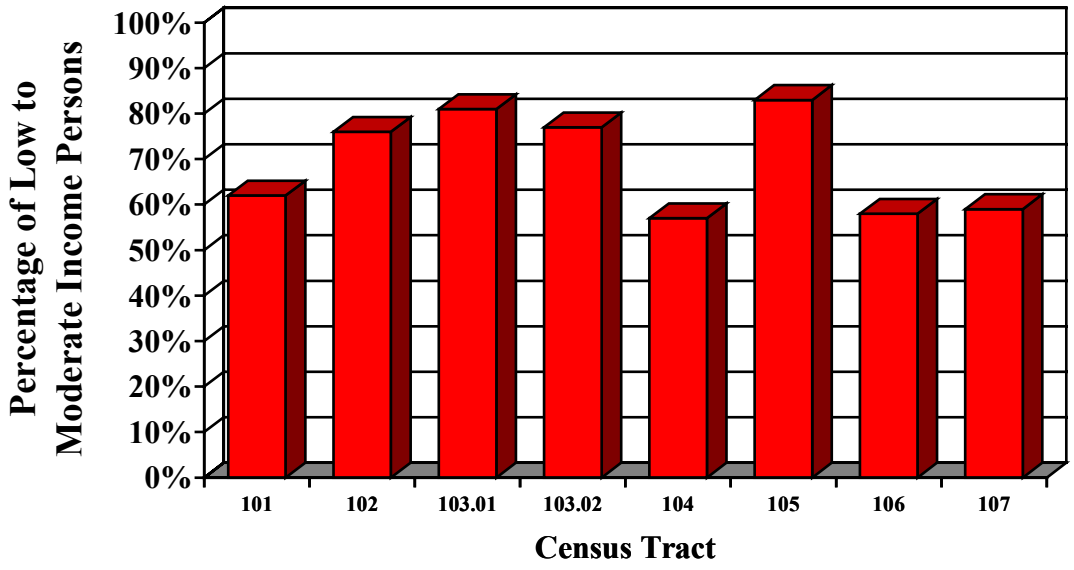
Figure 2-5
San Marcos Population by Age and Gender (1990)



Income

The City of San Marcos has a median family income of $23,757. The city is in the Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which has a median family income of $41,800. Sixty-nine percent San Marcos residents are classified as low to moderate income. In all eight of the city's census tracts, more than 51% of the population is low-to-moderate income. According to the 1990 census, 30% of the population is living below the poverty level. The high percentage of students included in the San Marcos population contributed somewhat to this relatively low income level. However, the figures do indicate a significant problem. Figure 2-6 presents the percentage of low to moderate income persons by census tract.

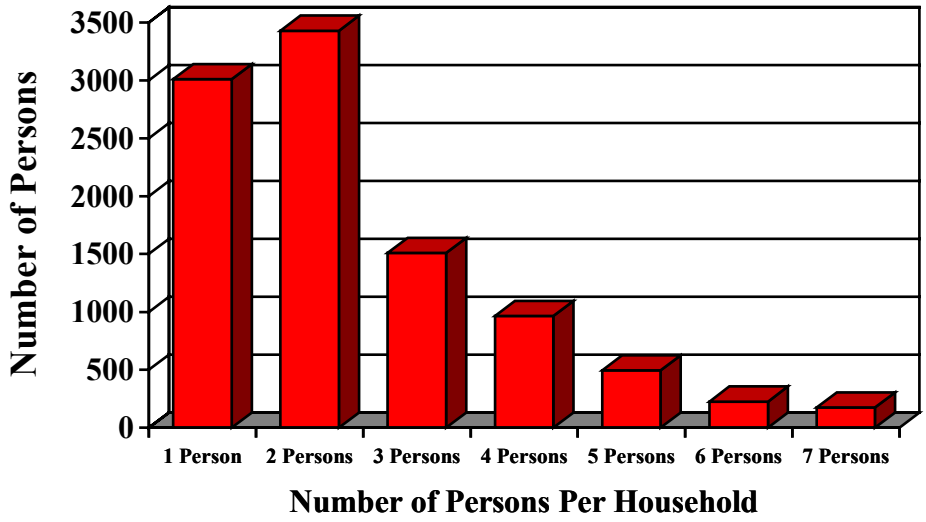
Figure 2-6
San Marcos Low to Moderate Income Persons by Census Tract (1990)



Households Characteristics

According to the 1990 Census, there were a total of 9,849 households in San Marcos. Of those, 46% contain families (a householder and one or more persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.) The remaining 56% are non-family households (a householder living alone or with non-relatives only [i.e., roommates].) Average household size in San Marcos is 2.4 persons. This low household size is largely influenced by the city's large student population. The number of persons living in households is 23,680 with the remaining 5,063 residing in group quarters (i.e., dormitories). Figure 2-7 presents San Marcos population by persons per household.

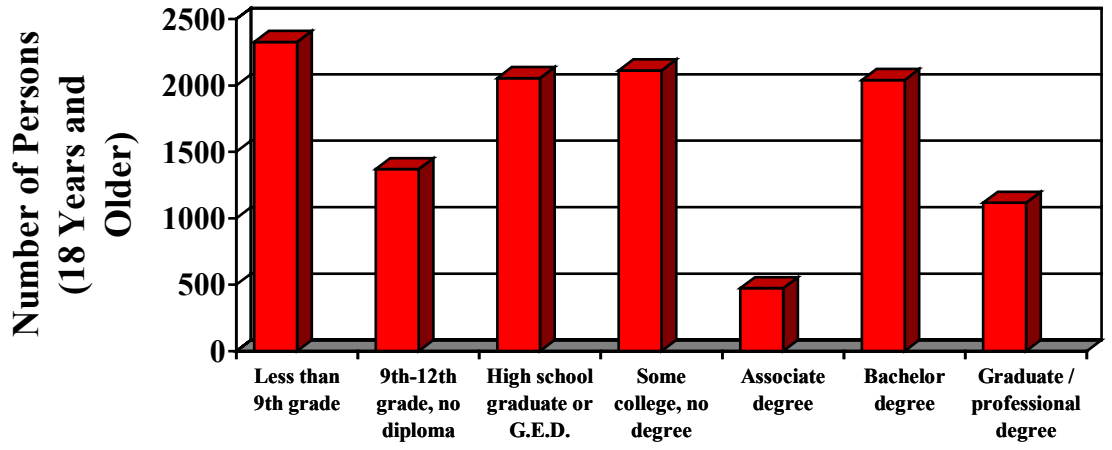
Figure 2-7
San Marcos Population by Persons Per Household (1990)



Educational Attainment

According to the 1990 Census, the people of San Marcos fall into two general groups based on education. Sixty-six percent of the population 18 years and older have at least some college education, and 47% of those over 24 years have received a college degree. However, 19% of the population 18 years and older have less than a high school education. Figure 2-8 presents San Marcos population by educational attainment.

Figure 2-8
San Marcos Population by Educational Attainment (1990)

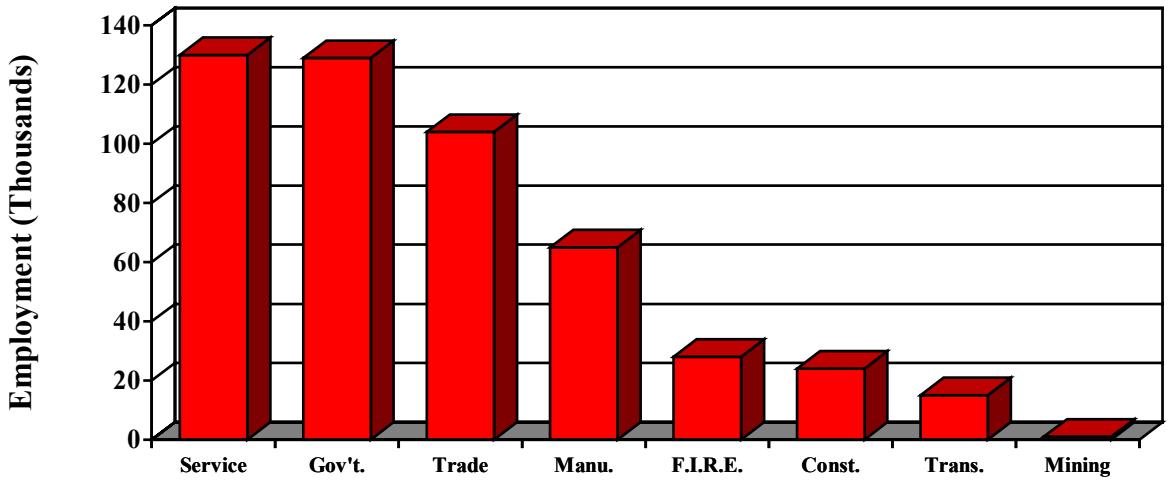


THE ECONOMY OF SAN MARCOS

Austin-San Marcos MSA Economy

The Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has the fastest growth rate of any MSA in the state of Texas. The Austin-San Marcos MSA consists of Hays, Travis, Bastrop, Caldwell, and Williamson counties. The economic base of the Austin-San Marcos MSA is the government, services, trade, and manufacturing sectors. One of the largest factors in the economic growth of the Austin-San Marcos MSA is the increase in the high tech manufacturing sector. The 1994 average Austin-San Marcos MSA civilian labor force was 582,851 persons. The average unemployment rate for 1994 in the Austin-San Marcos MSA was a low 3.6%. This is the second lowest of the 27 MSA's in the State of Texas. Figure 2-9 presents the Austin-San Marcos MSA employment by sector.

Figure 2-9
Employment by Sector
Austin-San Marcos MSA
January 1995

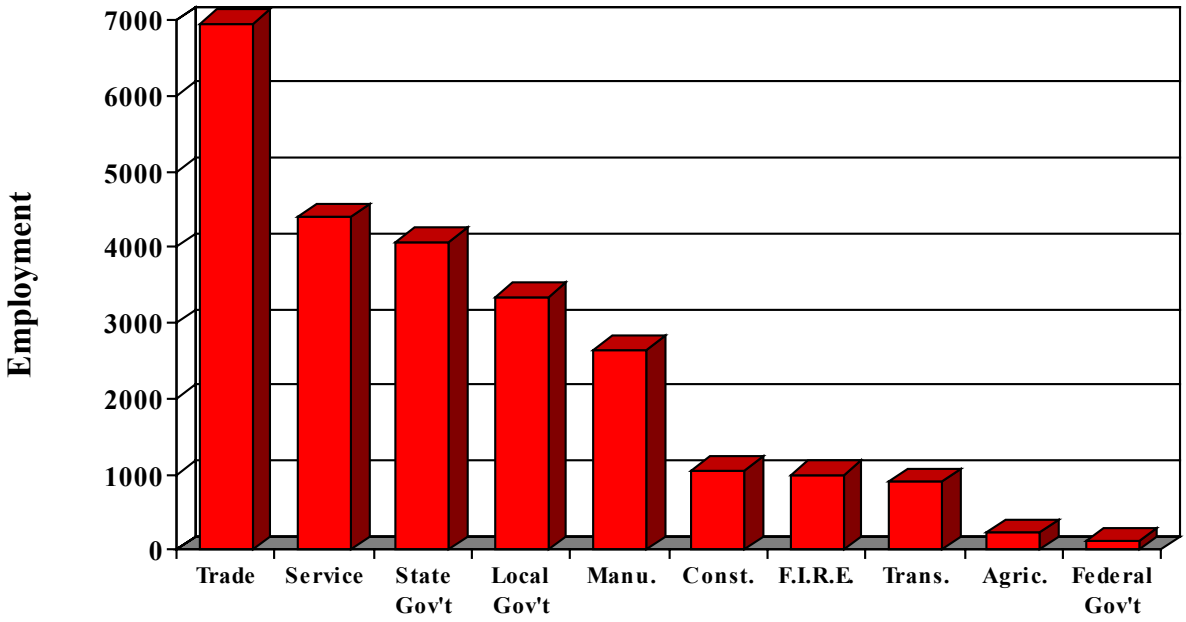


Note: F.I.R.E. represents the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors.

Hays County Economy

The 1994 average Hays County civilian labor force was 40,539 persons with an average unemployment rate of 3.4%. A county's civilian labor force is defined as the number of persons that live in a county and are eligible to work. Many Hays County residents live in the county but work in other counties. The average number of people employed in Hays County during 1994 was 24,717. Figure 2-10 presents employment by sector in Hays County.

Figure 2-10
Employment by Sector
Hays County
January 1995



Note: F.I.R.E. represents the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors.

San Marcos Economy

Major Employers

San Marcos is located at the southeastern edge of Hays County and enjoys a strong and stable economic base built around education and government. The city's economy is diversifying and gaining strength in the tourism, retail, manufacturing, and health services sectors. The average 1994 San Marcos civilian labor force was 17,216 persons with an unemployment rate of 5.0%. San Marcos accounts for 42% of the civilian labor force in Hays County. The following list, developed by the Greater San Marcos Economic Development Council, presents the major employers in San Marcos. The Major Employers map is presented on the following page.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN SAN MARCOS
JANUARY 1995

NAME	TYPE	NO. OF EMPLOYEES
Southwest Texas State University	State university	2,465
San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (C.I.S.D.)	Public school system	900
San Marcos Factory Shops	Designer outlet mall	750
Texas Educational Foundation	Job Corps vocational training	742
Tanger Factory Outlet Center	Designer outlet mall	600
Hays County	County government	560
Central Texas Medical Center	Hospital and Wellness Center	505
City of San Marcos	City government	408
Marshal Gas Controls	Gas BarBQ regulators	292
H.E.B. Food Store	Retail grocer store	275
Aquarena Springs Resort	Entertainment park/inn	250-600 (seasonal)

Southwest Texas State University

Southwest Texas State University (SWT), with its 333 acre campus has a current enrollment of approximately 21,000. It is the seventh largest university in the state and the largest employer in San Marcos. SWT has expanded its educational offerings to include more than 130 undergraduate degrees and 42 master's degree programs. SWT directly employs 2,465 people. In 1990, a study determined the economic impact of SWT on the local economy which showed that the university accounted for a large share of the city's business volume, residential rental income, and construction activity.

Tourism

Aquarena Springs, Wonder World, historic districts, and outdoor water recreation are the main attractions of the city's growing tourism industry that annually attracts more than 2.7 million visitors. These attractions employ over 550 people during the peak season and generate over $50 million annually. Over 700 hotel/motel rooms are available in San Marcos of which the majority were built during the last 10 years. The downtown area also contributes to the growing tourism industry through its promotion of "San Marcos - A Texas Natural".

The development of two factory outlet retail centers in the city has had a strong impact on the tourism industry in San Marcos. The San Marcos Factory Shops and the Tanger Factory Outlet Center have a combined total of over 150 outlet stores covering over 600,000 square feet. The centers employ a total of 1,350 persons, and annually attract over 3.7 million shoppers to their facilities. Since the vast majority of customers come from outside San Marcos, these facilities are similar to tourist attractions in terms of their economic impact.

Manufacturing

Manufacturers in San Marcos process, install, and/or distribute products as diverse as aircraft components, metal computer housings, batteries for electric cars, and photographic equipment. The manufacturing sector accounts for 12% of the total jobs in the San Marcos area. Of the 38 manufacturers in San Marcos, the top 10 are listed below.

MAJOR MANUFACTURERS IN SAN MARCOS

JANUARY 1995

NAME	TYPE	NO. OF EMPLOYEES
Marshall Gas Controls	Gas BarBQ regulators	292
Thermon Manufacturing	Conduction/Insulation	260
H.E.B. Distribution Center	Merchandise distribution	250
Rohr San Marcos	Aircraft assembly/engines	150
TRICO Industries	Oil exploration/drilling equipment	150
Wide-Lite Corp.	Lighting Fixtures	150
CFan	Aircraft assembly/engines	127
Butler Manufacturing	Prefab steel buildings	115
Electrosource	Electric vehicle batteries	97
Gulf Business Forms	Business forms	75

Cost of Living

San Marcos participates in a quarterly cost of living survey known as ACCRA which compares items from housing to groceries in over 300 cities nationwide. The first quarter 1995 report gave San Marcos an ACCRA index of 98.2, signifying an overall cost of living nearly 2% below the national average of 100.0. The following chart presents the ACCRA cost of living index breakdown for San Marcos.

Categories	**San Marcos Index**	**Above/Below National Average Index**
Composite Index	98.2	-1.8%
Grocery Items	94.6	-5.4%
Housing	100.6	+.6%
Utilities	82.0	-18.0%
Transportation	103.8	+3.8%
Health Care	106.3	+6.3%
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	98.7	-.3%

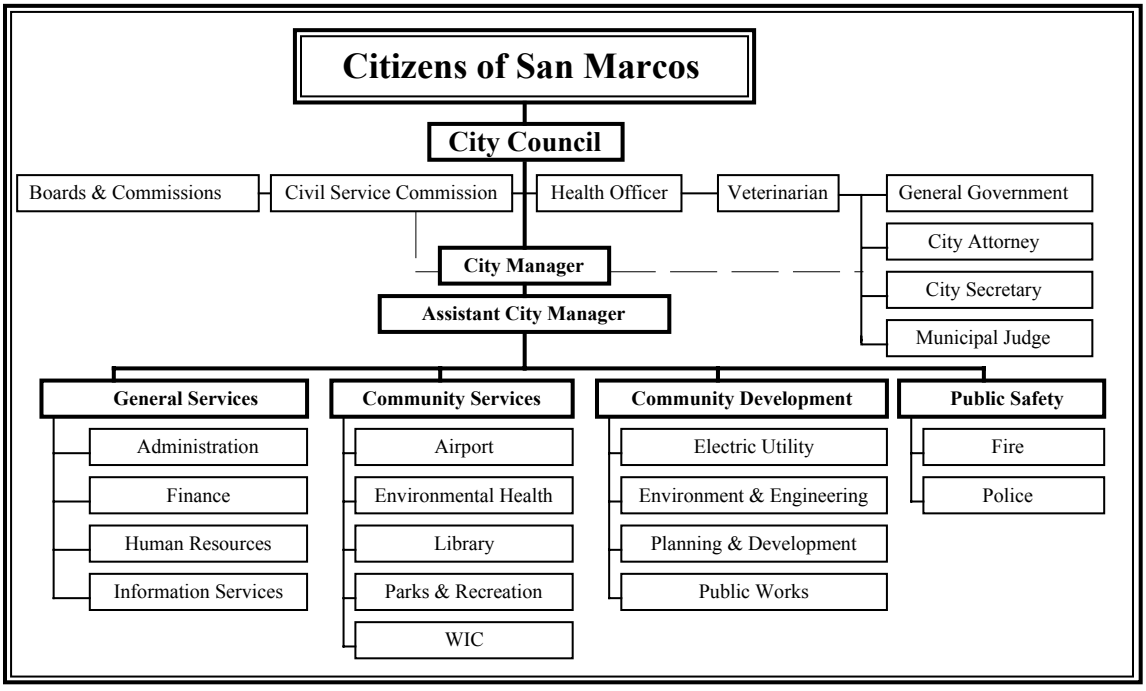
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

City of San Marcos Facilities

Municipal Government

San Marcos is a home rule city and operates under a city charter. The city has a council/manager form of government. The council sets policies and the city manager is the chief administrative officer of the city. The six council members and the mayor are all elected at-large. The term of office is three years for the council members, and two years for the mayor. At least two council seats are on the general ballot annually.

The City of San Marcos currently has 408 employees. The city has 17 departments divided into five general categories. The categories are General Government, General Services, Community Services, Community Development, and Public Safety. The chart below presents the organization of the city government.



The City of San Marcos owns various facilities including the City Hall complex, police headquarters, three fire stations, a public library, the San Marcos Municipal Airport, a wastewater treatment plant, the Women, Infants and Children program building, the animal shelter, and the San Marcos Electric Utility. The City of San Marcos Public Facilities map is presented on the following page.

Police Department

In April 1992, the San Marcos Police Department moved into a newly remodeled 42,000 square foot facility located at 2300 S. IH-35. The building houses the Records and Communications, Administration, Criminal Investigations, Patrol, Narcotics Task Force, and Training Divisions. The new facility also features a state of the art firing range, a 125,000 square foot driving track and a emergency operations center. The facility also serves as a regional training center for other agencies. It is anticipated that this facility will serve the needs of the Police Department well into the future.

The department has 65 commissioned officers divided into three divisions; nine in the Criminal Investigations Division, eight in the Administration Division, and 48 patrol officers. The department also has 21 civilian employees. The department maintains an average response time of two to five minutes. With a 1995 population estimate of 37,011, San Marcos currently has 1.2 officers per 1,000 city residents.

The City of San Marcos provides patrol service to all areas within the city limits. Areas outside the city are patrolled by the county sheriff's office. The University Police Department patrols the Southwest Texas State University campus.

Fire Department

The fire department operates three stations in the city. These are the Central Station at Hutchinson and Guadalupe Street, the Holland Street station at Holland Street and Academy, and the Broadway station at Broadway and Parkdale. These stations contain three class A pumper trucks, one 65 foot aerial ladder truck, one brush truck, and one rescue unit. All areas in San Marcos are located within a 1.5 mile radius of these stations except for the extreme northeastern and southwestern sections of the city. There are currently 32 active firefighters and 20 reserve firefighters in the department.

The State Board of Insurance, an agency that analyzes the capabilities of fire departments, has assigned a very favorable Key Rate of $.19 to the City of San Marcos. In addition, the city's success in minimizing fire damage has prompted the insurance industry to grant a blanket discount of 20% for commercial insurance. This combines to give San Marcos one of the lowest fire insurance rates in the state. The Fire Marshall reviews all development proposals to ensure compliance with the Standard Fire Code and enforces the city's fire prevention ordinances.

The City of San Marcos provides fire protection to all areas within the city limits. Responses to fires outside the city limits are handled by several volunteer fire departments surrounding San Marcos.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

San Marcos/Hays County EMS, which operates by contract with the City of San Marcos and Hays County, provides emergency and medical transportation in San Marcos and outlying areas in the southern and eastern portions of Hays County, including the City of Kyle. The headquarters facility is located at 1305 N. IH-35.

Public Library

The present San Marcos Public Library opened on January 9, 1994. The 27,000 square foot facility is located at 625 E. Hopkins Street, across from City Hall. The library contains 86,518 volumes with an annual circulation of 376,472. The one story building includes a spacious children's area, a quiet study room, a microcomputer lab, and an adult learning center. It also has a large meeting room and a small conference room that are available for public use without charge. It is anticipated that the new library will serve the needs of San Marcos for the next 15 years. The facility was designed to accommodate a future expansion capable of doubling the size.

The library has recently achieved several of its long range goals. These goals include having an adequate level of staff to provide seven day per week service with extensive evening hours, moving into a modern facility of sufficient size for future growth, automating basic library functions, and developing first class adult education programs. The automation process has involved circulation, cataloguing, and acquisition functions, and converting the card catalogue into an on-line data base to which the public has access, via computer modem.

Municipal Airport

The San Marcos Municipal Airport is the largest and most active general aviation airport in the region, covering 1,356 acres on SH 21 in northeast San Marcos The airport is classified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a reliever airport in the national airport system. It provides users an alternate to the congestion at Robert Mueller Airport in Austin and at San Antonio International Airport. The airport property is larger in land area than Austin's Robert Mueller Airport. The airport contains five corporate aircraft and maintenance hangars, T-hangar spaces for 28 airplanes, a carport-style shelter with a 14-plane capacity, a large aircraft parking apron, and a terminal building. The terminal building contains a lobby, pilot's lounge, meeting

rooms, rest rooms, and office space. The airport is fully capable of handling everything up to and including the smaller (B-737/MD-80) commercial airliners efficiently and safely.

The San Marcos Municipal Airport has four runways that range between 5,500 to 6,300 feet in length. Two of the runways and the taxiway are lighted for night use. The major runway is equipped with an instrument landing system (ILS) which allows properly equipped aircraft to make safer landing approaches in poor weather conditions. The fixed base operator (FBO) located in the terminal building is responsible for monitoring the unicom radio frequency upon which traffic and service advisories are provided to pilots of aircraft operating in the vicinity of the airport.

The airport provides a base for over 100 aircraft and the home to various businesses that provide services primarily to general and corporate aviation. These include Berry Aviation, Canelas International Aviation, Gafford Aero, Southwest Texas Aviation, McKee Avionics and Aviation, the McCoy Corporation's flight operations. In addition, the Confederate Air Force maintains the Cen-Tex wing and a small aviation museum at the airport.

In 1992, the airport master plan was completed. The master plan forecasts growth in airport activity and the needs for future facilities and services. The forecasted increase in airport activity is based on the existing abundance of runways, available land area, San Marcos's strategic location and the FAA "reliever" designation of the airport,

The forecasted growth of aviation activity may stimulate secondary development both within the airport boundaries and in adjacent areas. Land use compatibility is a major concern because of the inherent noise and safety considerations. A considerable amount of existing open space between the airport and the Blanco River serves as a buffer from the most urbanized portions of San Marcos. Much of the surrounding area is rural or very low density, including the Quail

Creek Country Club and some small, scattered single family subdivisions on the northwest side of SH 21. However, adjacent to the airport is the intensely developed Gary Job Corps on the south, and the unincorporated community of Reedville on the southwest.

Park System

The Parks and Recreation Department currently maintains 20 parks (160.83 acres) throughout the City of San Marcos. San Marcos has a total of 4.35 acres of park land per 1,000 city residents. Facilities in these parks include recreation centers, jogging trails, playscape equipment, baseball and softball fields, a swimming pool, basketball courts, tennis courts, and picnic areas.

Regional Parks

San Marcos has four regional parks. These parks include Gary Park Sports Complex, Memorial Park, Ramon Lucio Park, and Rio Vista Park. These parks are over 10 acres in size each and generally provide facilities that are utilized by people within a 20 mile radius of San Marcos. The 88.20 acres of regional park land represent 60% of the city's total park land. The parks feature lighted fields, a swimming pool, river access, and tennis courts.

Community Parks

San Marcos has nine community parks. These include Bicentennial, Children's, City, Dunbar, Fish Hatchery, Lowman Field, River Ridge, San Marcos Wildlife Habitat, and Veramendi parks. These parks are under 10 acres in size and provide facilities for the entire community. The 46.72 acres of community park land represent 32% of the city's total park land.

Neighborhood Parks

San Marcos has seven neighborhood parks. These include Hills of Hays, Castle Forest (undeveloped), H.E.B., Sendera, Swift, Veterans, and Victory Gardens parks. These parks are all under five acres in size and provide facilities for specific residential neighborhoods. The 11.73

acres of neighborhood park land represent 8% of the city's total park land. An area of concern is the availability of neighborhood parks. Only 33% percent of the city's residents are within 1/4 mile of a neighborhood park. In addition, only 54% of the neighborhood parks are developed.

University Parks

Sewell Park is owned and maintained by Southwest Texas State University (SWT). The park was developed to provide facilities for students and faculty of the university. In addition, SWT owns Aquarena Springs golf course, a 9-hole facility.

Private Recreation

Quail Creek Country Club is an 18-hole semi-private golf course located on State Highway 21 near the San Marcos Municipal Airport.

Parkland Dedication

The San Marcos Subdivision Ordinance requires the dedication of parkland for large new subdivisions. The regulation requires that 5% of the land in subdivisions larger than 20 acres be dedicated to the public for park use. The city is responsible for constructing recreational improvements to the park site.

The following is a list of all city owned parks, their size, and each park's amenities.

CITY OF SAN MARCOS PARKS SYSTEM

NAME	SIZE	AMENITIES
Bicentennial Park	2.94 acres	picnic tables, jogging trail, river access
Castle Forest Park	2.57 acres	undeveloped
Children's Park	5.77 acres	restrooms, picnic tables, playscape, jogging trail
City Park	7.75 acres	recreation hall, restrooms, picnic tables, football/soccer, basketball, playground, river access, Inner-tube rental
Dunbar Park	7.3 acres	recreation hall, picnic tables, basketball, playground, multi-purpose field
Fish Hatchery	3.4 acres	community building, xeriscape, river-walk
Gary Park Sports Complex	40 acres	restrooms, concessions, softball, football/soccer
H.E.B. Park	1.0 acre	picnic tables, playground,
Hills of Hays Park	2.91 acres	undeveloped
Lowman Field	7.3 acres	radio-control model aircraft runway (not dedicated parkland)
Memorial Park	12.56 acres	San Marcos Public Library and future activity center
Ramon Lucio Park	22.1 acres	pavillion, picnic tables, baseball fields, jogging trails
Rio Vista Park	13.54 acres	pavilions, municipal swimming pool, restrooms, picnic tables, tennis, basketball, volleyball, playground, jogging trail, river access
River Ridge Park	7.4 acres	clock tower, tennis, basketball, jogging trail
Wildlife Habitat #1	8.8 acres	picnic tables, jogging trails
Wildlife Habitat #2	2.38 acres	picnic tables, jogging trails, restrooms
Sendera Park	3.5 acres	picnic tables, basketball, playground
Swift Memorial Park	.25 acre	basketball, playground
Veramendi Plaza	1.24 acres	Cock House museum, gazebo, memorial grove, gardens, picnic tables, river-walk
Veterans Park	1.25 acres	picnic tables, basketball, playground
Victory Garden Park	.25 acre	basketball

Activity Center (Planned)

In 1994, a $5.3 million bond proposition was passed to construct a new 50,000 square foot Activity Center. The new facility will be located adjacent to the public library on Hopkins Street. It is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 1996 and will house numerous facilities and programs. Included in the center will be a double gymnasium, a six-lane swimming pool, three rooms for various activities, a large meeting room, and an indoor walking trail.

Women, Infants and Children Program

The City of San Marcos administers the state and federally funded Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program for a nine county area that includes Hays, Caldwell, Bastrop, Comal, Guadalupe, Kerr, Kendall, Gillespie, and Bandera Counties. The WIC Program provides services to over 9,500 participants on a monthly basis with program participation continually growing.

The primary goal for the federally funded WIC supplemental food program is to improve the chances for a healthy life for families at nutritional risk. Pregnant women and children up to five years of age are eligible for WIC Program benefits. The WIC program provides a health and nutritional assessment, supplemental foods, nutrition, and immunizations to program participants as well as referrals into the health care system.

Water System

The City of San Marcos' water source is the Edwards Aquifer that produces some of the purest water found anywhere in the nation. San Marcos pumps water from six wells and adds fluoride and chlorine to disinfect the raw water, but no other water treatment is performed. The City of San Marcos water system has approximately 6,000 metered connections. In 1994, San Marcos pumped a total of 2.131 billion gallons of water from the aquifer. Average daily water use in

1994 was 5.5 million gallons per day (MGD), with a maximum peak of 9.9 MGD, and a minimum daily use of 3.8 MGD.

The design capacity of the water system is 17.1 MGD. New infrastructure and continuous improvements to the existing system are a high priority to the City of San Marcos. To ensure adequate and diversified waster sources in the future, the City Council has purchased reservations for surface water from nearby Canyon Lake.

A preliminary engineering report on the proposed Surface Water Plant was completed in October 1994, which contained recommendations for use of the contracted 4.5 MGD of Canyon Lake. The study, conducted by HDR Engineering, has long range plans to expand the water supply to meet the projected needs of the community to the year 2045.

Wastewater System

The City of San Marcos operates one wastewater treatment plant which was constructed in 1970. The plant is located just east of River Road adjacent to the San Marcos River. A major plant expansion completed in 1986 increased the capacity to 6.25 million gallons per day (MGD). The plant uses the contact stabilization treatment process and consists of headworks facilities, mixing chamber, reaeration basins, clarifiers, chlorine contact facilities, gravity sludge thickener, aerobic digestion basins, sludge drying beds, and laboratory/office facilities. Treated effluent is discharged through a 24-inch outfall into the San Marcos River. The area immediately north of the plant is used for land application of sludge.

In 1994, the City of San Marcos treated and discharged into the San Marcos River a total of 1.4 billion gallons of treated water. The average daily return flow was 3.8 MGD, with a maximum peak of 7.4 MGD, and a minimum discharge of 2.8 MGD. San Marcos wastewater system has approximately 5,600 utility connections.

The San Marcos wastewater system consists of approximately 140 miles of sanitary sewers ranging in diameter from 4 to 36 inches. The system consists primarily of vitrified clay pipe; however, polyvinyl chloride, cast iron, and truss pipes have also been used. There are five major trunk lines that convey most of the flow from the city to the main lift station. All wastewater flow is pumped from the main lift station, located near the San Marcos River on the east side of IH-35, through two 20 inch force mains to the wastewater treatment plant. There are 41 smaller lift stations within the San Marcos wastewater collection system that serve small localized areas. The City's wastewater system includes septic and pretreatment, sludge injection and a 24-hour monitoring system.

A wastewater system master plan, conducted by Black and Veatch, was completed in 1994. The plan recommended $28.4 million in wastewater system improvements over the next five years. The improvements included upgrading the existing wastewater treatment plant capacity to 9 MGD, improvements to the liquid treatment facilities, improvements to the sludge dewatering and stabilization facilities, purchase of sludge disposal and composting equipment, and improvements to the collection system.

Electric Utility System

The San Marcos Electric Utility is a municipally owned utility that maintains and constructs the electric distribution system within its 15 square mile jurisdiction. The system serves 13,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers. The system contains 309 miles of primary distribution lines served by four substations, with an annual peak load of 72.9 Megawatts, and operates with a 68.1% load factor. The San Marcos Electric Utility has carried a 99.99% reliability since 1983.

The system was purchased by the City of San Marcos from the Lower Colorado River Authority in 1986, with the City of San Marcos taking over the operation in 1991. The system's total distribution capacity is 120 Megawatts.

The San Marcos Electric Utility rates are among the lowest in the state of Texas. The city's residential rate, $0.058 KWH, is 30% lower than the average residential rates in the state. It is also considerably lower than rates charged in surrounding cities, by local cooperatives and investor-owned utilities. Industrial rates provided by surrounding utilities average 30% to 66% higher than those in San Marcos.

Solid Waste Collection

The City of San Marcos currently contracts with Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) to provide residential garbage collection. The solid waste is hauled to the City of Creedmore landfill located southeast of Austin. BFI also operates the city's recycling program which provides curbside pick-up. Commercial and industrial facilities are required to contract for solid waste collection and may choose from a number of independent providers.

Storm Drainage

The San Marcos Drainage Master Plan was completed in 1994. The plan developed criteria for drainage infrastructure to provide a standard level of service throughout the community. The plan also analyzed the existing drainage system and established a list of priorities for improvements to the system. The recommended improvements exceed $25.2 million. The improvements are organized into two major categories: 1) improvements to install or upgrade storm sewer systems to address area flooding such as widespread inundation of streets and surrounding properties, and 2) improvements to install or upgrade roadway culverts to reduce excess stormwater flows across streets. Lastly, the plan examined various funding mechanisms that would enable the city to complete construction of the priority projects.

Other Area Utility Facilities

Water Systems

The City of San Marcos provides water service to customers inside and in some areas outside the city limits. Water is provided to additional areas outside the city limits by five privately owned and operated water systems. These water providers include the Crystal Clear Water Supply Corporation (WSC), Elim WSC, Maxwell WSC, County Line WSC, and the Martindale WSC. All of these systems draw water from the Edwards Aquifer.

Electric Utility Systems

The San Marcos Electric Utility (SMEU) provides electric service to customers inside and outside the city limits. Electric service is provided outside the SMEU served area by two privately owned and operated electric cooperatives. These electric utility providers include Pedernales Electric Cooperative and Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

Natural Gas

Entex, Inc., is the major supplier of natural gas for San Marcos. Its distribution system ranges from 8 to 4 inches and down to 1/2" intermediate pressure lines, and has an average heat content of 1,025 BTU/CF. Entex, Inc. has approximately 4,400 utility connections.

Telephone

Century Telephone of San Marcos, Inc. (CTSM), formally San Marcos Telephone Company, is a subsidiary of Century Telephone Enterprises Inc. CTSM is the 16th largest local exchange telephone company and the 17th largest cellular operator in the U.S. CTSM serves approximately 25,000 access lines in a 172 square mile area.

The company's state-of-the-art equipment includes a 50,000 line capacity, northern telecom digital switch (DMS 100) with dual processor redundancy, six digital remote line switches, 100% single party service, and 100% of optical fiber trunking.

The reliability of CTSM's telecommunications service is considered among the best in the nation. The quality of service and the company's focus on customer service have resulted in its receiving one of the highest levels of customer satisfaction in Texas. Fewer than 1.5% of its customers report any type of service problems. More than 99.2% of all out-of-service reports are cleared within eight working hours.

Century Telecommunications (CTI) uses two 100% digital switches for full redundancy, and a 100% digital fiber optic network to provide a full range of long distance services to San Marcos and Central Texas customers.

CTI's Operator Services Division serves the hospitality, health care, higher education, and the public and independent pay telephone markets.

Cable Television

TCI Cablevision of Texas (TCI) offers cable television service to the San Marcos area. TCI contains 300 miles of cable and its service area includes all of San Marcos, Reedville, the Hunter Road area, and Martindale. TCI offers more than 40 channels to its 11,000 customers in San Marcos.

Education Facilities

San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (SMCISD)

SMCISD serves over 6,500 students in pre kindergarten to grade 12 on nine campuses and two alternative education centers. The campuses consist of one pre-kindergarten school, four elementary schools, one new intermediate school (fifth and sixth grade), one seventh grade school, one eighth grade school, and one high school. All district schools are fully accredited by the Texas Education Agency. The district owns more than 200 acres of land and 649,403 square footage of buildings. The district covers over 200 square miles in Hays, Guadalupe, and Caldwell counties.

The SMCISD budget is more than $33.7 million. Average expenditure per student is $3,866. The student/teacher ratio is 17/1 elementary and 15/1 secondary. The student population is 61% Hispanic, 34% White, 4% Black, and 1% other.

The average test scores of college-bound students exceed the state and national averages on the SAT, ACT, and TAAS. Advanced placement, gifted and talented, special education, and "tech prep" are among the many programs available to students.

Other Public School Systems

Public school districts surrounding SMCISD include Hays Consolidated ISD, Lockhart ISD, Navarro ISD, Comal ISD, Seguin ISD, and Wimberly ISD.

Private Schools

There are several private schools in the San Marcos area. San Marcos Baptist Academy, founded in 1907, is a non-profit coed institution for boys in grades 6-12 and girls in grades 8-12. It is one of Texas' largest boarding schools with an enrollment of 208 boarding students and 101 day students from eight foreign countries and around the U.S.. The curriculum emphasizes college

admissions, but also accommodates students who are not college bound. The school is fully accredited by the TEA, the SACS and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest.

Hill Country Christian School (HCCS) is a church family-oriented educational program. HCCS educates students using the Accelerated Christian Education curriculum and serves approximately 125 students in grades K-12.

Wonderland School is an educational alternative operating in San Marcos since 1965. Serving 205 children from 6 weeks old to 6th grade, it offers instruction using a multisensory teaching approach based on phonetics.

Master's School of San Marcos has 21 students in grades 1-5.

San Marcos Adventist Junior Academy has 35 students in grades K-10.

Gary Job Corp Center

Gary Job Corps Center (GJCC) is a federally funded academic and vocational training center. The center is operated by the Texas Educational Foundation for the income-eligible 16-24 year old men and women. GJCC offers job training in 26 trades, basic education courses, a GED program and driver's education. The institution consists of an 800-acre campus, located just outside the city limits on a portion of the old Camp Gary army airfield. The center is adjacent to the San Marcos Municipal Airport. While the large majority of the 2,200 coed students live in dormitories on-campus, a small percentage are enrolled as non-resident day-students from the Austin/San Marcos area. Approximately 75% of the Gary Job Corps students are from Texas, with the remainder being from Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.

Southwest Texas State University (SWT)

SWT is a state-supported public university that offers 130 undergraduate and 42 graduate programs. It is Texas' seventh largest university with approximately 21,000 students, and a faculty and staff workforce of approximately 2,500. Many of the educational, recreational, and cultural programs and facilities are available to the general public, thereby providing opportunities that normally exist only in communities much larger than San Marcos. Art, music, dance, and theater programs, along with NCAA Division I-AA athletics, add to the cultural enhancement of San Marcos. The 333 acre campus dominates the city's skyline.

Austin Community College (ACC)

In response to the rapid technological advances in industry, ACC has developed programs that assist the business community and governmental agencies in meeting employee training needs. ACC offers a two-year program in manufacturing technology specifically designed to upgrade skills of manufacturing workers and to train people for careers in that field.

ACC's Center for Career and Business Development bring college and community resources together to offer a comprehensive range of training programs and educational services for employers. The center works with the Texas Department of Commerce to develop and conduct specialized programs of industrial start-up training that are short-term, industry-specific skill and task-oriented. The center also works with manufacturing and high-tech firms to assess their training needs and to design basic and advanced level training programs for a wide variety of skills. More than 20 business and industry-related night classes are offered at ACC's new San Marcos branch center, located at San Marcos High School.

Health Care Facilities

Central Texas Medical Center

The Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC), located at 1301 Wonder World Drive, is an acute-care hospital offering services in over 30 departments including Cardiopulmonary, Emergency, ICU-CCU, Laboratory, Maternity Services, Outpatient Surgery, Pediatrics, Physical Therapy, Medical Imaging, and Social Services. CTMC is operated by the Adventist Health Systems Sunbelt. In 1995, CTMC formed a health care alliance with Seton Hospital in Austin. The Hospital, formally the Hays County Memorial Hospital, was originally licensed for 40 beds. In 1981, Hays County Memorial was rebuilt at its present location. The present 96,000 square foot facility has 109 beds. CTMC has an annual payroll in excess of $8 million with approximately 505 employees and 130 physicians on staff.

The newest addition to CTMC is the Central Texas Wellness Center. The center contains orthopedics, sports medicine, classes in wellness management, nutrition, and aerobics, physical therapy services, and a fitness center with pool facilities.

In addition to San Marcos, CTMC provides health care services to the rural and small-town populations of a multi-county region including Hays, Caldwell, and portions of Comal and Guadalupe counties. In response to the increasing demands of the expanded service area, CTMC is involved in a five-year expansion plan involving remodeling existing facilities, construction of new parking lots, enlarging emergency services, and the future construction of a four-story 105,000 square-foot out-patient/day surgery center adjoining the main hospital building.

Heath Facilities

The San Marcos Treatment Center is a fully accredited Brown Schools Psychiatric facility located on 62 acres in San Marcos. The center provides therapeutic inpatient programs for children, adolescents, and young adults.

The Scheib Opportunity Center and Sheltered Workshop provide local adult mental health and retardation services as an outreach program for the Austin State School and the Austin State Hospital.

The Tangram Rehabilitation Network, Inc. treats adults with traumatic brain injuries. With six facilities for progressively independent living, clients learn independent skills, hold jobs, and have responsibilities in a non-institutional family-like environment.

SAN MARCOS TODAY - IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

During the San Marcos Horizons visioning process, the Citizens Advisory Committee developed a list of reasons why San Marcos is a unique place and a list of issues that threaten San Marcos. Following are the results of their work.

San Marcos is a unique place because of its "great natural beauty and the rare environmental setting of the community."

Reasons listed were:
- The San Marcos Springs;
- The San Marcos River;
- The Edwards Aquifer;
- At the front door of the Texas Hill Country;
- Unique natural features including hills, clear water, and an abundance of plant life;
- A beautiful part of Texas;
- Clean air and water - not polluted; and
- Lots of green space.

San Marcos is a unique place because of its "strategic location between Austin and San Antonio."

Reasons listed were:
- Close proximity to Austin and San Antonio;
- At the center of the Austin-San Antonio corridor;
- Advantageous geographical location;
- Close to, but distinct identity from two large cities;
- Convenient location to big town amenities (business, cultural, sports, educational, etc.);
- Between two growing cities;
- On major interstate connecting two major cities; and
- Central location for businesses serving the region.

San Marcos is a unique place because of its "small town atmosphere."

Reasons listed were:
- Strong community identity;
- Medium sized city with small town feeling;
- Home town feeling;
- Good size for a community;
- Quiet neighborhoods;

- Nice place to live;
- Community with a good quality of life;
- Small enough to walk places; and
- Doesn't have the problems (crime, pollution, etc.) of a bigger city.

San Marcos is a unique place because of "the people in the community."

Reasons listed were:
- Culturally diverse population;
- Good neighbors and friendly people;
- Cooperative spirit of the people;
- Involvement of the citizens;
- Informed, active citizenry;
- Lots of community participation; and
- Good people that care about a good community.

San Marcos is a unique place because of "the education opportunities available within the community."

Reasons listed were:
- The presence of Southwest Texas State University;
- Growing, state-supported institution;
- Good university - community relations;
- University is a major employer in the community;
- Public schools benefits from university's presence;
- Training opportunities at Gary Job Corp.;
- Good public and university libraries;
- Educational resources for businesses and industries; and
- Availability of a variety of secondary and post-secondary educational programs.

San Marcos is also a unique place for the following reasons:

- Mild climate compared to other parts of the country;
- History and heritage including the courthouse square, historic neighborhoods, and historic structures;
- Room to grow;
- Tourist attractions including Aquarena Springs, Wonder World, and the outlet malls;
- Availability of good shopping;
- Good police protection and safe neighborhoods;
- Forward thinking local government; and
- Good potential for economic growth/employment opportunities.

San Marcos is threatened by "traffic problems."

Issues listed were:
- Increasing traffic congestion;
- Inadequate street system;
- Lack of railroad overpasses;
- Lack of east/west thoroughfares;
- Need to widen streets;
- Increased freeway traffic;
- Railroad splitting city in half;
- Lack of adequate university parking;
- Parking problems downtown;
- Traffic problems around schools; and
- Expansion of highways impacting businesses.

San Marcos is threatened by "the deterioration of our natural environment."

Issues listed were:
- Depletion of the Edwards Aquifer;
- Growth over the Edwards Aquifer;
- Over-usage of rivers;
- Abuse of the natural environment/ecosystem;
- Depletion of water supply;
- Decreased water quality;
- Over development along the San Marcos River;
- Pollution from industries;
- Hazardous waste spills; and
- Environmental damage.

San Marcos is threatened by "the impacts of uncontrolled growth."

Issues listed were:
- Growth of Austin and San Antonio spilling over into San Marcos;
- Community getting too big;
- Loss of community identity/small town atmosphere;
- Growth outpacing infrastructure;
- Sprawling growth;
- Uncontrolled growth along IH-35;
- Being "swallowed up" by Austin's growth;
- Becoming a "bedroom community" of Austin;
- Huge increase in population; and
- Uncontrolled growth in county - outside of city control.

San Marcos is threatened by "problems of youth and education."

Issues listed were:
- High dropout rates and low achievement scores;
- Inadequate school funding;
- Lack of safe place to educate children;
- Mediocrity in our school system;
- Overcrowding of schools;
- Increasing school enrollment;
- Lack of parental involvement in education;
- Lack of educational opportunities for minorities;
- Failure to properly educate our young people;
- Lack of adequate youth facilities;
- Lack of planning in school locations; and
- Increase in gang and drug activity.

San Marcos is threatened by the "lack of economic opportunities."

Issues listed were:
- Lack of job opportunities;
- Lack of economic growth;
- Lack of employment opportunities for low income persons;
- Disparity in employment opportunities for various ethnic groups;
- Poverty in the community;
- Underdeveloped tourism potential;
- Lack of a skilled labor force; and
- Lack of resources dedicated to economic development.

San Marcos is threatened by "increases in crime."

Issues listed were:
- Increased gang and drug activity;
- Increased vandalism;
- Lack of security in neighborhoods and public places; and
- Police force too small to keep up with growing crime rate.

San Marcos is also threatened by such issues as:

- Low tax base;
- Lack of cooperation among major groups in the community;
- Neighborhood groups with self interests over community-wide interests;
- Chamber of Commerce focused only on growth;
- Polarization of ethnic groups;
- Environmental extremists;
- Emphasis on short-termed gain over long-term quality;

- Over reliance on sales tax for community's revenues;
- Lack of cooperation among units of government (local, state, and federal);
- Rental properties deteriorating our neighborhoods;
- University students with no "buy-in" as residents of city;
- Loss of history and origins of city;
- Deterioration of neighborhoods;
- Too many apartments;
- Encroachment of SWT into neighborhoods;
- Lack of adequate parkland;
- Small town mentality - not looking at regional picture;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Lack of middle class housing;
- Lack of executive housing;
- Poor drainage;
- Junk on lots/uncut lots;
- City "red tape"/uncooperative local government;
- Wrong types of industries;
- Lack of industrial space;
- Inability to control events (NAFTA/"bullet train");
- Changes in the downtown district;
- Lack of variety in downtown businesses;
- Loss of attractive downtown;
- Flood hazards;
- Poor foundation conditions;
- Lack of quality in building projects;
- Public apathy;
- Special interest groups; and
- Resistance to change.